JESUS: A PASSION PLAY

MAX EHRMANN

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JESUS

A PASSION PLAY

Max Ehrmann has done a great piece of dramatic work. —*Indianapolis News.*

Possessing all the glamour and color of the oriental world and teeming with human passions.—*Pittsburg Press.*

More than anything else, what I like about it is its unrelenting reality and brass tackism. From beginning to end it is real.—*Jack London.*

A grandly conceived religious pageant and spectacle.— *St. Louis Globe Democrat.*

It is a big piece of work, for it is filled with many emotions of many men.—*Baltimore American.*

It is human, realistic, and dramatically effective. It is a daring achievement.—*Pittsburgh Sun.*

I have enjoyed many an artistic moment in this interpretation. I wish indeed we could have on the stage such symphonic effects . . . and such poetic entrancements.—*Israel Zangwill.*

Wonderfully simple and wonderfully eloquent and compelling.—*Detroit Times.*

There is a kind of noble agony throughout the play that puts it high among the big tragedies.—*Rupert Hughes.*

It is marked by a dignity that comports with its tremendous subject.—*New York Press.*

I read it with keen appreciation of its technical workmanship and its high poetic value.—*Bliss Perry.*

It is a finished and imposing work.—*Buffalo Courier.*

The relation is daring. The great passion play at Ober Ammergau cannot be compared to it.—*Trenton (N. J.) Times.*

An impressive and reverent work.—*Boston Globe.*

A piece of work beautifully done.—*Cale Young Rice.*

JESUS

A PASSION PLAY

BY

MAX EHRMANN

Author of "The Wife of Marobius,"
"A Prayer," "Poems," etc.

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The persons who founded Christianity are here stripped of supernatural embellishment; and they are represented as simple, real, ardent Orientals in the throes of a great and impending tragedy.

Act I. The Cleansing of the Temple.
Act II. Disputations in the Temple.
Act III. Gethsemane.
Act IV. The Trial before Pilate.
Act V. The Resurrection.

ACT I

THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE

PERSONS IN ACT I

JESUS
MARY, a Magdalene
TERRENO, Captain of the Roman Guards
CAIAPHAS, High Priest
JOSES, Jesus' Brother
MEIER, a Pharisee
JACHIN, an Overseer of the Temple
DAVID, a Damascene
NATHAN, a Galilean
JUDAS, PETER, Disciples of Jesus
JOSIAS, AMIEL, Priests

ZARAH, JOSEPH, Jerusalemites
KORA, DATHAN, JUBAL, Money Changers
SIMEON, JUDAH, ZERA, SARAS, Scribes
ELEAZAR, BENJAMIN, SALA, BOOZ, EZRA, JACOB, Traders

Temple servants, Roman soldiers, Phœnicians, Jerusalemites, a Gaulanite, an Egyptian Jew, a Canaite, a Cæsarean, and many others.

ACT I

A portion of the Court of the Gentiles in the Temple at Jerusalem. At back are quadruple rows of Corinthian columns and a balustrade. Except a long table at right the Court is barren of furnishings. It is about the year 29, a Spring morning before the Feast of the Passover.

[*Five Temple servants on their knees are mopping the floor.*]

FIRST SERVANT

We are nearly done.

SECOND SERVANT

By noon the floor will look as if we had not touched a cloth to it.

THIRD SERVANT

I never saw so many persons. All the streets are crowded.

FOURTH SERVANT

There are more heathen than last year.

THIRD SERVANT

Yesterday I saw a good many Greeks.

First Servant

Phœnicians have always come to the Passover.

Second Servant

There are more Arabians.

First Servant

No, there are more Phœnicians.

Fourth Servant

What difference does it make?

Third Servant

It does not make any difference. They are all heathen.

Second Servant

They envy us our God.

Third Servant

Some of them laugh at us.

First Servant

They have gods of their own.

Second Servant

But they do not believe in them.

Fourth Servant

How could they believe in them? They are false gods. They are not even dead gods. They never lived at all. The heathen only imagine that they lived.

SECOND SERVANT

How can the uncircumcised know anything about God?

THIRD SERVANT

They cannot. The uncircumcised cannot know anything about God.

SECOND SERVANT

It is dreadful to be uncircumcised.

FOURTH SERVANT

I am an old man. I have prayed every day since I was a boy for Messias to come. Israel has suffered enough. God soon will see that Israel has suffered enough.

FIRST SERVANT

Samuel, do you think the judgment of the Lord is near?

FIFTH SERVANT

I do not think of it at all. I am troubled today. My son is sick.

THIRD SERVANT

Perhaps he has sinned.

FIFTH SERVANT

I do not know if he has sinned.

FIRST SERVANT

Rabbi Joseph says it will be another seventy years before Messias will come.

THIRD SERVANT

Some say it will be less than fifty years.

FIFTH SERVANT

I do not think anybody can tell how long it will be.

[*Some persons are passing at back.*]

FOURTH SERVANT

It is terrible that the heathen rule over us. It was not so in the days of our forefathers.

FIRST SERVANT

Night before last I saw the moon suddenly break through the heavens, like a great piece of gold that was falling. I watched, trembling, but nothing else happened.

FOURTH SERVANT

One of these nights God will send Messias.

SECOND SERVANT

He will be a fighter that the Romans cannot withstand. His breast will be like stone, and his voice like the roar of young lions on the mountain.

FIFTH SERVANT

Not long ago someone asked a son of Annas when Messias would come. He laughed and told him it was ridiculous.

FOURTH SERVANT

A son of Annas would not say that.

SECOND SERVANT

No, he would not say that. The Sadducees do not talk much.

FIRST SERVANT

Neither do they believe much.

THIRD SERVANT

My father told me it would happen in my life if I lived to be his age. He was an old man when he died.

[*Enter Eleazar and Benjamin, traders; they approach the servants.*]

SECOND SERVANT

It will be wonderful to see the Romans bow down before us.

THIRD SERVANT

It will be wonderful to hear them crying out for the Holy Law, and begging for circumcision.

FOURTH SERVANT

The Lord is watching. He will crush them. Messias will crush them.

ELEAZAR
(Trader)

Where is the overseer?

FOURTH SERVANT

We have not seen him. He has not been here.

ELEAZAR

(Trader)

[*To Benjamin, as they turn away.*] The poor have great faith. Heard you the old man?

BENJAMIN

(Trader)

It is their only treasure. What they cannot have now they dream they will have hereafter. [*Pass off.*]

[*Other persons pass in and out. Some sheep are led to left across the Court at back.*]

FIRST SERVANT

We must hurry. The people are coming.

[*Enter Sala and Booz, traders.*]

SALA

What did you bring?

BOOZ

Sheep. [*More sheep are led to left across the Court at back.*] Those are mine. They have grazed till now on the plains of Sharon. They will bring a good price.

SALA

My oxen are not placed. [*To the Temple servants.*] Where is the overseer?

FOURTH SERVANT

We have not seen him.

[*Re-enter Eleazar and Benjamin, traders.*]

SALA

Eleazar, where is the overseer?

ELEAZAR

We cannot find him.

BENJAMIN

This is our great day for trade . . . .

BOOZ

Yet we are standing here waiting for Temple officers.

SALA

We pay the priests rent enough.

ELEAZAR

The cheap traders on the roads have been selling for an hour.

BOOZ

Everything will soon be in disorder if the overseer does not come.

[*Several more persons enter; some of whom approach the traders.*]

A PERSON

I want to buy a sheep. Where are the sheep?

ANOTHER PERSON

I came early. I want the first choice. I do not want what the people leave.

ANOTHER PERSON

I do not see the oxen. Where are the oxen?

BENJAMIN

We cannot sell till the overseer comes. The tenders are now driving in the animals. Have patience.

ANOTHER PERSON

I want doves. Where are the dove sellers?

BOOZ

We do not know anything about dove sellers. We sell oxen and sheep.

ANOTHER PERSON

I have no Temple money. Where are the money changers?

BENJAMIN

We do not know. Go away!

[*Enter Jachin, overseer of the sacrifices.*]

FOURTH SERVANT

[*Calling to the traders.*] Here is the overseer!

[*The traders, impatient, all trying to talk at the same time, confront Jachin.*]

BENJAMIN

I have oxen. Give me a place. The people are clamoring.

SALA

I have oxen.

BOOZ

I have sheep. They are in the Court.

ELEAZAR

I have sheep. Quickly, Overseer, give me a place.

JACHIN

[*Pushing them back.*] Patience, patience!

A PERSON

Where are the money changers?

ANOTHER PERSON

We cannot buy sacrifice for the Feast with heathen money. Everybody ought to know that. Where are the money changers to give us Temple money?

ANOTHER PERSON

I want doves. Where are the doves?

JACHIN

It is early. Everybody be patient!

[*Tables are brought in for the money changers.*]

JACHIN

They are bringing in the tables of the changers. [*To the traders.*] Come, I will give you places for your animals. [*All hasten toward back.*]

[*More traders enter leading sheep across the Court at back. Almost a continuous stream of persons is coming in and another going out. The Court is fairly crowded now. There is beginning to be confusion. Several dove sellers enter carrying wicker cages filled with doves. They take their stand on the left side of the Court, back of the tables of the money changers, and begin to arrange their cages.*]

DOVE SELLER

[*To persons crowding around him.*] Wait until I am ready. There will be enough for everybody.

ANOTHER DOVE SELLER

Wait until the money changers come. We cannot change heathen money, we are not allowed to. . . .

ANOTHER DOVE SELLER

Where are the money changers?

ANOTHER DOVE SELLER

The holy money will be here soon. I think the changers are coming.

JACHIN
(Overseer)

[*Shouting near the balustrade at back.*] No more sheep this way! Bring them in with the oxen at the Cipunus Gate! I will not have any more sheep brought this way.

[*Several Phœnicians are seen at front near the dove sellers.*]

FIRST PHŒNICIAN

The Jews are a noisy people.

SECOND PHŒNICIAN

They are more noisy than the Syrians at Hierapolis in the worship of their goddess.

THIRD PHŒNICIAN

You would think you were in the midst of a Damascus fair.

SECOND PHŒNICIAN

Why are they so impatient?

FOURTH PHŒNICIAN

Each wants to buy first, in order to get the best animals for sacrifice.

SECOND PHŒNICIAN

What difference does it make if the animals are for sacrifice?

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First Phœnician

They eat them afterwards. The rich buy oxen and sheep, the poor buy doves, and the very poor buy meal, for sacrifice.

Second Phœnician

Is their god a bloodthirsty god to require so much sacrifice?

First Phœnician

I do not know anything about their god.

Second Phœnician

Perhaps they are afraid of him, and are trying to appease him.

First Phœnician

I think they are trying to get him to do something for them.

Third Phœnician

They are expecting great things of their god. But I think he must hunt a great deal and pay very little attention to them, for they are always crying out to him and giving him blood.

First Phœnician

They are expecting him to send a great general from the sky to conquer the world for them.

Second Phœnician

How foolish!

[*Now and then the bleating of sheep and the lowing of oxen may be heard. Everybody is chattering and moving about or trafficking with the traders. The money changers enter carrying bags of money, which they place on the tables. The crowd gathers around them.*]

KORA
(Money Changer)

Stand back! Everybody will be served.

DATHAN
(Money Changer)

I am ready. . . . But not so fast! I cannot serve two persons at a time.

A PERSON

I have Tyrian and Grecian money.

JUBAL
(Money Changer)

I can change the Grecian money. Dathan there will weigh the Tyrian.

A PERSON

You are charging me too much exchange.

KORA
(Money Changer)

It is the regular rate. What do you expect?

DATHAN

(Money Changer)

[*Scales in hand, balancing various coins.*] Tyrian money is soft. It wears quickly. If it is old it cannot be of full measure. This money is lacking in weight. Look at the scales. Do they balance?

JUBAL

(Money Changer)

[*Calling out.*] I can provide Tribute money. All who have not paid the half-shekel Temple Tribute! . . .

A PERSON

You have not given me back enough money.

JUBAL

(Money Changer)

We charge one-fourth denar on every half-shekel.

THE PERSON

I cannot see why we should pay so much.

JUBAL

(Money Changer)

The rate is correct. It is fixed by the Council. We pay rent for the privilege of changing in the Temple. Stand aside, others are waiting.

A YOUTH

Give me enough for three oxen. My father

and uncles are waiting yonder near the cattle. I am in a hurry.

KORA
(Money Changer)

[*Giving him coin.*] The exchange is less for large amounts.

[*Overseer Jachin, followed by traders, pushes through the crowd.*]

EZRA
(Trader)

Last year my sheep stood here in this corner.

JACHIN

You will stand your sheep on the north side. Look [*pointing to the left*], many droves of sheep and oxen are already on this side. There must be a passage left for the people. I will not have the people crowded. They must have room to inspect the lambs and oxen.

EZRA
(Trader)

Come, show me where I shall stand on the north side. Shall I bring my sheep through here?

JACHIN
(Overseer)

Bring them in at the Cipunus Gate. Have your sheep been examined?

EZRA
(Trader)

Here are the certificates.

JACHIN
(Overseer)

Show them to the keeper of the gate where you bring them in.

[*They disappear in the crowd. Three priests emerge and place themselves behind the long table at right. Each opens a large book.*]

JOSIAS
(Priest)

[*Calling out above the noise.*] We will receive the Temple Tribute! Those who have not paid! . . . The Temple Tribute! . . . The Temple Tribute! . . .

[*Many crowd around and pay, the priests recording their names.*]

A GAULANITE

[*To a dove seller.*] This dove is poor. I want a fat one.

JACOB
(Dove Seller)

It is as fat as any.

THE GAULANITE

I will not have it. Let me see that one.

JACOB
(Dove Seller)

I will not take it out. This one is as good as any. They all have been well fed.

THE GAULANITE

I will not take it.

JACOB
(Dove Seller)

They are all alike. We sell them as we take them out of the cages, one after another.

AN OLD MAN

I want five doves.

A DOVE SELLER

This is Syrian money. I cannot take it.

OLD MAN

Is it not good silver?

DOVE SELLER

I do not know. Have it changed at one of the changers' tables. I do not understand heathen moneys.

OLD MAN

They charge exchange. You understand Syrian money. It is the only piece of coin I have. Come, no one will see us. Or should anyone see us, you can call a changer and have it changed.

DOVE SELLER

I will not take heathen money. Take it to one of the changers. There, Dathan is now idle a moment.

OLD MAN

[*Walking away.*] How the servants of the house of the Lord have grown in greed!

DOVE SELLER

[*To old man.*] Perhaps you have grown childish.

[*Now and then a Pharisee pauses in a corner long enough to repeat his prayers; a few of the busy purchasers and heathen sightseers looking on a moment.*]

A ROMAN SOLDIER

[*Walking with two other Roman soldiers.*] Look. . . . Isn't that Terreno coming?

SECOND ROMAN SOLDIER

It is.

THIRD ROMAN SOLDIER

How long has he been captain of the guards?

FIRST ROMAN SOLDIER

He was here when I came.

THIRD ROMAN SOLDIER

There is a woman with him.

FIRST ROMAN SOLDIER

She meets him here every year during the Feast.

SECOND ROMAN SOLDIER

She is beautiful. Who is she? . . . a Jewess?

THIRD ROMAN SOLDIER

Such hair does not grow on the head of a gentile.

FIRST ROMAN SOLDIER

She is from Magdala.

SECOND ROMAN SOLDIER

Magdala? Where is that?

FIRST ROMAN SOLDIER

I do not know. I only know that Terreno told Artius that her name was Mary and that she was from Magdala. Artius says that Terreno is not happy in his love, the Jewess has another lover.

SECOND ROMAN SOLDIER

They are coming this way, let us pass on.

[*Now and then, when there is a momentary lull in the wrangling of the traders, the jingling of the coins, the jargon of the many languages and dialects, the lowing of the oxen and the bleating of the sheep, there may be heard, coming from the Inner Court, the long, low chants of the Levites and the prayers of the priests.*]

TERRENO

Have I spoken words that hurt you, Magdalene?

MARY

Your words are full of fire, I fear the fire.

TERRENO

It is wonderful to play with fire as you and I have played with it.

MARY

I will not think of pleasures that are gone.

TERRENO

On yonder mountain you and I have watched the sun go down. . . .

MARY

And the moon rise up— No, no, I will not think of it! I will think only of my soul.

TERRENO

In the shadow of the trees I held you close to me. I twined a wreath of olive blossoms for your head. I let down your hair. You looked like a barbarian princess in some far off wood.

MARY

Do not tempt me. I am still weak. I will not think of it. I will not think of pleasures that are gone.

TERRENO

We can live them all again, Magdalene.

MARY

Your thoughts are evil in the house of God.

TERRENO

Look at these traders and money changers in the house of your God. They are like men in battle that strike with spears the faces of their enemies. Or they are like thieves that enter at night when the master of the house sleeps.

MARY

They are evil. They think of this world.

TERRENO

On the mountain the almond blossoms are breaking into bloom, and the olive trees send out young leaves of tender green. Let us leave this place, and climb again our mountain of lost pleasures. Perhaps, Magdalene, we shall find them all again.

MARY

Find some other woman to hunt with you for lost pleasures. I now hunt eternal pleasures.

TERRENO

Are you waiting for some other lover?

MARY

O, yes! . . . some other lover.

TERRENO

Who is he that takes your love from me? In Rome men kill for the theft of love. I will not give you up.

MARY

His love is not like yours.

TERRENO

Are his lips redder than mine with the thirst of desire?

MARY

Never have his lips touched mine. Nothing in the world is as pure as are his lips.

TERRENO

Perhaps it is his hair. . . . Perhaps his hair is blacker than the wings of a bird in the night. Or is it waving gold, like moonlight quivering on a river? Have you trembled as you stroked his hair?

MARY

No woman's hand has stroked his hair.

TERRENO

Or do his eyes tell you of some new joy in the woods when it is night?

MARY

They tell of joy in other worlds.

TERRENO

Other worlds! . . . Come, come, your talk is wild. . . . How can you give yourself to one who does not woo?

MARY

I would follow him through this world and through another.

TERRENO

Perhaps if I, like your priests, should put on grand manners. . . .

MARY

He puts on none.

TERRENO

Is he a Jew?

MARY

Every man is his brother.

TERRENO

You are talking like a woman who has drunk too much wine.

MARY

I stagger with the wine of his spirit.

TERRENO

Show him to me.

MARY

Wait here and you shall look on him.

TERRENO

O, I remember now that you once told me of a foolish prophet.

MARY

Do not mock him. Your eyes have not yet looked upon his face. . . . I hear shouting below in the valley! It may be he. I am sure it is he. He is coming.

TERRENO

There is so much noise here, how can you tell the sound is from the valley?

MARY

I am sure he is coming. Let us look into the valley. Come. . . . Come! [*She goes toward the balustrade at back, Terreno following. They disappear in the crowd.*]

[*A group of scribes comes forward, discussing.*]

A YOUNG MAN

Rabbi, is my wife permitted to bake bread on the Passover?

SIMEON

(Scribe)

Not thick loaves.

JUDAH

(Scribe)

She may bake thick loaves if she likes.

ZERA
(Scribe)

Granting that she may bake bread but not thick loaves, the question arises how thick may the loaves be without outraging the Holy Law.

SIMEON

She may bake bread the thickness of one span.

JUDAH

I cannot see why you say " one span."

SIMEON

I reason thus, the shew bread is one span. It is permissible to bake it on the Passover. Therefore your wife may bake common bread on the Passover if it is no thicker than a span.

JUDAH

Your reasoning is clear but wrong. What is there in common between shew bread and ordinary bread? The shew bread belongs to the priests; but common bread belongs to ordinary people.

SARAS

And furthermore, in baking shew bread only dry wood is used, while in baking ordinary bread damp wood may be used. That, it seems to me, is the great difference between the two breads.

JUDAH

And still further, for shew bread an iron stove is used, while ordinary bread may be baked in an earthen oven. Therefore, Rabbi Simeon, I cannot see how you can compare the two breads. They have absolutely nothing to do with each other.

SIMEON

I shall quote Rabbi Jose, who was Rabbi bar Alba's master, who was my master. Rabbi Jose says thick loaves may be baked. By thick loaves, he says, is meant large quantities of dough.

SARAS

Can you not see, Rabbi Simeon, that. . . .

THE YOUNG MAN

[*Interrupting.*] Pardon, Rabbi, my wife is calling me, I cannot wait for the answer.

[*They continue discussing as they retire into the crowd.*]

DATHAN

(Money Changer)

[*To a group of persons arguing before his table.*] This is no place for arguments. You are obstructing the passage to my table. Stand aside!

[*The group, still arguing, moves to the front.*]

MEIER
(Pharisee)

It is strange that I have never heard of him. I have heard of all the false prophets since the days of Herod.

A JERUSALEMITE

For my part I have no interest in new prophets.

SECOND JERUSALEMITE

Where is he from?

JUDAS

Nazareth.

THIRD JERUSALEMITE

Where is Nazareth?

JUDAS

In Galilee, on the Great Road that crosses the Jordan below the Sea of Galilee.

A CÆSAREAN

It is near where I live. I have been there. It is a dirty little town wherein are several potteries and a dyeworks.

SECOND JERUSALEMITE

How can a prophet come from such a place?

JUDAS

Cannot the Lord raise up a prophet where he will? Many persons already believe in him, and

the followers of John the Baptist have come to him.

AN EGYPTIAN JEW

John the Baptist — who is he?

JUDAS

He was a great prophet.

FIRST JERUSALEMITE

I have never heard of him.

SECOND JERUSALEMITE

Nor I. Was he likewise a Nazarene?

JUDAS

He lived in the wilderness and fasted long and prayed much. Some said he was Elijah come a second time.

MEIER

(Pharisee)

Was it not he that was put to death by the Tetrarch?

JUDAS

Herod slew him. He cut off his head.

A CANAITE

It is horrible!

JUDAS

John taught the coming of Messias and the judgment of the people. He commanded the

people to repent before it is too late. But the people did not pay any attention to him. Now Jesus of Nazareth has come. He is a greater prophet than John.

MEIER
(Pharisee)

What does he prophesy?

JUDAS

He likewise prophesies the judgment of the Lord, that Daniel and Enoch told of, when the heavens and the earth will melt before the anger of the Lord, and the wicked be slain, and the . . .

SECOND JERUSALEMITE

[*Interrupting.*] I have heard these prophecies since childhood. My father before me heard them from his childhood. But the heavens continue as they were, and the earth is not melted away.

JUDAS

You will believe when you have heard Jesus of Nazareth.

FIRST JERUSALEMITE

Is that his name?

JUDAS

Yes.

THIRD JERUSALEMITE

There are in the Temple this morning not fewer than a hundred men named Jesus. A prophet, I have always thought, should have a grand name.

THE EGYPTIAN JEW

Has he any followers?

JUDAS

Many in Cana, and by the Sea of Galilee, in Capernaum, Bethsaida, and other places, have believed in him.

THE EGYPTIAN JEW

In Alexandria we do not have new prophets. We have a good many philosophers. But they are harmless. They do not stir up the people. They sit and think and do not say very much.

FIRST JERUSALEMITE

The Galileans are simple-minded; they believe anyone. In Jerusalem we do not believe every person who says strange things.

THE CANAITE

I am from Galilee. I have heard Jesus of Nazareth teach. But I do not believe what he says. He thinks the end of the world is near, and that God very soon will send Messias. I think he believes he himself is Messias. But I have not heard him say so.

MEIER
(Pharisee)

It is ridiculous.

JUDAS

Wait until you have heard him speak, and have seen him do wonderful things.

MEIER
(Pharisee)

Has he done anything wonderful?

JUDAS

I will tell you one thing wonderful that he has done. It happened on the Sea of Galilee. He had been teaching until darkness came; then we . . . .

MEIER

[*Interrupting.*] "We"? Whom do you mean?

JUDAS

His disciples. I am one of them. . . . Then we took a boat to pass to the other side. A storm arose. The waves beat upon our boat, as if eager to drag us into the sea. The wind moaned like the cries of dying men. We were afraid. We awoke him, for he was asleep in the stern of the boat. He stood up erect, and cursed the wind, and bade the sea be still. After a time the sea obeyed, and peace lay over the waters. When

we saw these things, we looked upon him in fear. Of himself no man can command the sea.

THE CANAITE

I have heard this same thing told of Jesus of Nazareth.

THE EGYPTIAN JEW

No doubt the storm had spent itself.

MEIER

(Pharisee)

Only Beelzebub can command the sea.

[*Other persons join the group and stand listening.*]

JUDAS

How can you understand till you have followed him as I have followed him?

MEIER

(Pharisee)

You are young, and young men are always quick to believe new things.

JUDAS

He has healed the sick and driven devils from many persons.

SECOND JERUSALEMITE

They that practice magic can do the same. Does he heal all the sick that come to him?

JUDAS

Not all. Some do not have faith enough. He refuses to heal them if they do not have faith enough. Only a few days ago at Bethany he performed the greatest miracle that can be performed.

MEIER
(Pharisee)

I have not heard of it.

FIRST JERUSALEMITE

Nor I.

SECOND JERUSALEMITE

I don't think anybody has heard of anything remarkable happening at Bethany.

JUDAS

He raised a man from the dead.
[*They all laugh.*]

MEIER
(Pharisee)

What was his name?

JUDAS

Lazarus.

SECOND JERUSALEMITE

Saw you this Lazarus who was raised from the dead?

JUDAS

I saw him afterward.

THIRD JERUSALEMITE

Saw you him when he was dead?

JUDAS

No, but everything was told me when I came later to Bethany. They told me Jesus stood before the dead man's cave, and groaned within himself, and cried aloud, "Lazarus, come out," and he arose and came out. He that can raise the dead is more than a man. It may be he is Messias.

[*The crowd laughs again.*]

ONE IN THE CROWD

You yourself are sick with a devil.

MEIER

(Pharisee)

Did your prophet himself tell you this tale?

JUDAS

He did not tell me anything.

THE EGYPTIAN JEW

You need a physician.

MEIER

(Pharisee)

You are young. Have care with what folly you fill your youthful days. I am a Pharisee. I

believe the dead will arise. I am surer of it than anything in the world. But this fellow Jesus never raised anybody.

JUDAS

[*Indignant.*] Before the sun has gone down seven times, you shall all see the new judge on the throne of Israel.

[*Another outburst of laughter.*]

MEIER

(Pharisee)

Bring your prophet to a trial of his power. Let us see if he is indeed Messias.

[*Loud, angry voices have risen at back, near the oxen and sheep traders. The persons around Judas turn toward the noise, and disappear in the crowd.*]

A YOUNG MAN

[*To Judas, standing alone.*] Do not again tell that story about Lazarus. Father Meier is right. Jesus never raised anybody from the dead.

JUDAS

Do you know Jesus?

THE YOUNG MAN

I am his brother.

JUDAS

You — his brother!

THE YOUNG MAN

Yes, I am Joses. It pained me to hear them laugh at you.

JUDAS

Do you know what things Jesus is teaching?

JOSES

Only evil will come of them.

JUDAS

And your mother — what says she?

JOSES

Her heart breaks for him. A terrible thought has seized upon him. We think he believes he is the Son of Man told of by the prophet Daniel. When my mother and my brothers speak to him, his eyes look far off, and he moans within himself, and says strange words. We never could understand very well what he was talking about.

JUDAS

Have you heard of his deeds of wonder? Surely no man of himself can drive out devils and heal the sick.

JOSES

We have heard that he has performed miracles. But we have not seen him perform any. It has been told us that some of his followers say he is John the Baptist arisen from the dead, others that

he is Elijah. But all the while we know he is only our brother.

JUDAS

When we were at Cæsarea Philippi he was angered by the heathen and their many gods. Some say there are as many gods there as persons. It was there he told us that he also was a god, the son of the living God, Messias.

JOSES

[*Astonished.*] Said he that?

JUDAS

It was thus: we, being urged by Peter, called him Messias. He did not deny it. He seemed pleased. His anger disappeared. But he told us not to tell anyone, and he talked to us a long time — near the third watch of the night — about the kingdom.

JOSES

He has devils. He is lost. Can you not see that he has devils? . . .

JUDAS

Do not say that.

JOSES

Tell him to come home with us after the Feast. There will be work for him. He was a good carpenter. It may be that work will drive out

the devils. I have heard of such things. Our neighbors do not speak to us of him any more. They do not want to make us feel ashamed.

[*The crowd of quarreling men at back pushes forward, drowning the voices of Judas and Joses, and jostling them out of the way. There is confusion throughout.*]

JOSEPH
(Silversmith)

[*Backing away.*] He struck me! I was leading away my sheep. . . .

BOOZ
(Trader)

[*Being held back by several persons.*] He is a thief, he tried to steal one of my sheep! Take your hands off me!

BENJAMIN
(Trader)

Thieves should be driven from the Temple!

JACOB
(Dove Seller)

Drive him out!

JOSIAS
(Priest)

[*Pushing into their midst.*] Who is it that has dishonored the Temple by theft?

BOOZ
(Trader)

There he stands!

DATHAN
(Money Changer)

Drive him out!

JACHIN
(Overseer)

He should be taken to prison. I will call the guards.

SEVERAL VOICES

No, no! . . .

JOSEPH
(Silversmith)

I am no thief. I paid for the sheep. He urged me to pay a second time!

A JERUSALEMITE

I know this man, he is no thief.

ANOTHER

And I know him. He is a silversmith by the Upper Market on Zion.

SEVERAL OTHERS

And I know him, and I! . . .

JACHIN
(Overseer)

Booz says he is a thief. [*Calling aloud.*] Guards, guards!

[*Several Temple guards appear. The crowd grows larger.*]

NATHAN
(Galilean)

You dare not arrest him!

JACHIN
(Overseer)

Who are you to tell me what I dare not do?

A PERSON

We will appeal to the High Priest and the Council!

JOSIAS
(Priest)

Silence!

SEVERAL PERSONS

Shame, shame!

JOSIAS
(Priest)

Silence!

[*Eleazar, trader, approaching Booz, whispers into his ear, also into the ear of Josias.*]

JOSEPH
(Silversmith)

There, . . . that man [*pointing to Eleazar*] was standing by when I paid him!

JOSIAS
(Priest)

Let the traders go back to their animals.

[*The traders, pushing through the dense crowd standing around Joseph, return to their sheep and oxen.*]

JOSEPH

I paid for the sheep.

A PERSON

Where is your sheep?

JOSEPH

They took it from me.

AN OLD MAN

The greed of the traders grows like poisonous weeds in a swamp.

NATHAN

(Galilean)

We from Galilee suffer very much from these lovers of money. We despise them.

DAVID

(Damascene)

Here in the house of God, where we have come from many places to worship, we see good men robbed and beaten.

A PERSON

A dove seller cursed me.

A JERUSALEMITE

A money changer struck me as one would a dog. The priests protect them. They pay the

priests a lot of money for the privilege of robbing the people in the Temple. Persons living in Jerusalem know that is true. But they do not say anything. They are afraid to say anything.

ZARAH

(Jerusalemite)

In the time of our grandfathers all the buying and selling was done outside the Temple, beyond the Shushan Gate, where the small traders now sell. I have heard old men speak of it.

DAVID

(Damascene)

It should be done there still.

NATHAN

(Galilean)

We are cowards. If we had the blood of our fathers! . . .

ZARAH

(Jerusalemite)

[*Interrupting.*] Speak not so loud, lest you be overheard, and we who have taken the part of Joseph be driven from the Temple. I fear the traders.

A JERUSALEMITE

Others think as we do, but they are afraid to speak.

DAVID
(Damascene)

Is there not one strong man left in Israel to lead the people against these that lust after silver and gold?

ZARAH
(Jerusalemite)

For months every year these traders look forward to this day of profit. I think they would kill anyone who opposed them.

JOSEPH
(Arimathean)

[*Joining the others.*] Friends, I have just now witnessed this endeavor to dishonor a good man. It cannot always be so. The people are patient. Perhaps the people are too patient.

A PERSON

Look! Something is happening on the road below the Temple.

ANOTHER

Persons are running to the balustrade.

ANOTHER

And waving their hands. See the woman standing beside the soldier, . . . how she is waving her hands! Who is the soldier?

ZARAH
(Jerusalemite)

He is the captain of the guards stationed yonder in the Tower of Antonia.

ANOTHER

What are they calling out? There is so much noise here that I cannot understand what they are calling out.

DAVID
(Damascene)

Perhaps some one is amusing the people. But that should not be permitted on a day like this.

[*The crowd that had gathered around Joseph disperses, some of them hastening toward the balustrade.*]

DAVID
(Damascene)

The people change as the wind changes. A moment ago they would have drawn swords against the traders. Now they are led away by a strange noise. Perhaps it is a magic-worker, or Roman soldiers beating some one.

JOSEPH
(Arimathean)

It always has been so. The people waver. They are children.

ZARAH
(Jerusalemite)

[*To Joseph, the silversmith, who has returned from the balustrade.*] What is happening? What are they crying out?

JOSEPH
(Silversmith)

I think it is a procession of admiring persons following their teacher. He is riding on an ass. They are calling out something like "Rejoice, O daughter of Jerusalem! . . . The king will enter." They are strewing the ground with long grass which they have gathered from the roadside. Perhaps he is a prophet. But I think they are calling him a king.

ZARAH
(Jerusalemite)

He is likely only another fool who thinks himself a prophet. Many such come to Jerusalem every year. . . . Are many persons following him?

JOSEPH
(Silversmith)

Not many. They look like country people. Their faces are sun-beaten, and their feet are covered with dust.

DAVID
(Damascene)

Listen! Do you not understand what they are saying? They are crying out some words of the prophet Zechariah, " Rejoice. . . . O daughter of Zion! . . . your king is coming to you. . . . He is just, . . . lowly, . . . and rides on an ass." That is at least part of what they are crying out.

NATHAN
(Galilean)

I cannot hear that. I only hear shouts as of praise, and I hear singing. Do you not hear singing?

ZARAH
(Jerusalemite)

I do not call that noise singing. It is dreadful. I think they are weeping.

[*The noise of the procession, which slowly dies away, has but slightly interfered with the trading and confusion in the Court. The bartering and wrangling continue everywhere as before. The people move away from the balustrade. Mary and Terreno appear at front, near David, the Damascene, and others.*]

MARY

O, he is coming! He is coming to the gate to enter.

TERRENO

I have seen your lover, Magdalene. Is he not your lover?

MARY

He is enamored of my soul.

TERRENO

Is there then no hope for me?

MARY

There is hope.

TERRENO

That we may live again our lost pleasures?

MARY

That we may love as he would have us love.

TERRENO

Shall he judge when I shall touch your lips, when I shall hold you close to me, when I shall sit with you in the moonlight?

MARY

Will you hear him when he speaks?

TERRENO

I will not hear him. What words of this foolish Galilean. . . .

MARY

[*Interrupting.*] I will not listen to you.

TERRENO

Heard you some of them that followed him cry out and call him "king"?

MARY

I heard.

TERRENO

Pilate will not disturb religious madness; but rebellion against Rome is punished by death. Cæsar and the ragged ass-riding prophet of Galilee cannot both be king.

MARY

I do not understand anything about Pilate and Cæsar.

TERRENO

Have you been told the story of Judas the Gaulanite?

MARY

I have been told.

TERRENO

He stood against Rome. . . .

MARY

And was crucified.

TERRENO

If your Galilean lover proclaims himself king here in the Temple, I will call the guards.

MARY

The guards will be helpless if he lift his hand.

TERRENO

I will chain him in the Tower.

MARY

The Tower cannot hold him.

TERRENO

Your talk is foolish.

[*Another outburst of shouts outside the Temple.*]

MARY

He is coming! Hear, all the people are praising him!

[*Terreno pushes into the crowd and disappears. Above the noise in the Temple, more or less continuous cries of praise are heard coming from the right and back. There is a lull in the trading. Booz hastens to the tribute table.*]

BOOZ

(Trader)

[*Indignant.*] They are coming in. Must we listen to this noise here in the Court?

JOSIAS

(Priest)

It is against the law.

KORA
(Money Changer)

These people buy nothing, neither do they change any money. They have no money. They are dusty and ragged. Look at them.

BOOZ
(Trader)

Jachin shall call the guards.

[*Men, women and children, singing and shouting praises, push into the already crowded Court. The trading ceases, and there is great confusion.*]

SEVERAL VOICES

Here is he that shall bring back the kingdom of our fathers! . . . He is here in the name of the Lord! . . . The kingdom of David is coming again!

JOSIAS
(Priest)

Silence, blasphemers!

SEVERAL VOICES

[*Chanting.*] Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord!

KORA
(Money Changer)

[*Shouting.*] You have stopped all buying and selling! Out into the street, you beggars!

[*Traders, money changers, and priests, crying*

"Silence! Silence!" try to break into the crowd, which has formed a dense circle at back, and from which joyful cries continually arise.]

SEVERAL VOICES

[*Chanting.*] Praised is the kingdom of our father David that is about to come!

[*Cheers more or less continuous.*]

JACHIN

(Overseer)

[*Approaching with several Temple guards armed with clubs. In a loud voice.*] In the name of the Law, I command you to be silent in the Temple!

SEVERAL VOICES

[*Chanting.*] Daughter of Zion, now behold the king has come to you!

BOOZ

(Trader)

[*To Jachin.*] Command the guards to beat them back!

SALA

(Trader)

[*To Jachin.*] Order the guards to strike!

JACHIN

(Overseer)

[*Mounting a money changer's table.*] Disperse, disperse, profaners of the Temple! Go out into the streets!

DATHAN

(Money Changer)

Command the guards to seize him that stands in the center!

[*In the center of the crowd some one is speaking, but there is so much noise that his words cannot be understood.*]

SIMEON

(Scribe)

Jachin, command the guards to break into the crowd!

JOSIAS

(Priest)

Drive away the people! We will take the leader!

ELEAZAR

(Trader)

[*Rushing in from left, followed by several cattle and sheep tenders.*] Who is the leader?

JUDAS

[*Standing near him.*] He is Jesus of Nazareth. He is a great prophet.

ELEAZAR

(Trader)

He is in the hands of a devil! [*To the cattle and sheep tenders.*] Tear away the people. We will take hold of the leader. He is standing in the center of them.

[*The tenders and guards attack the people, striking several of them. A brief scuffle ensues. The crowd opens in front, violently pushing back the tenders and guards. In the center stands Jesus, surrounded by Peter, John, Philip, Thomas, Matthew, and other disciples and followers. Jesus is speaking, but in the noise and confusion what he is saying cannot be understood. More persons are running into the Court from every direction.*]

JACHIN
(Overseer)

[*Pushing his way toward Jesus and the disciples.*] I will take him! Forward, guards, seize him! Which is he?

[*Jachin is knocked down by Peter, and the guards do not advance. Peter is seized by several persons, who in turn are attacked by James, John, and other disciples.*]

JOSIAS
(Priest)

[*Standing on the tribute table.*] Madman, stand forth! The curse of Abraham fall upon you!

DATHAN
(Money Changer)

At least tell us why you have broken in upon us in this way.

JACHIN

[*Recovering.*] Come forward, else I will command the people to seize you! They have seen you defile the house of God!

[*There is a moment's suspense, some in the crowd shifting menacingly about Jesus.*]

JESUS

[*Pushes forward into an opening in the crowd. He is tall, powerful, but pale and worn. His words are continually broken into.*] You have turned this house of prayer into a den of robbers. . . .

ELEAZAR

(Trader)

Do you dare to call us robbers?

JESUS

You steal like thieves that enter when it is dark. . . .

JOSIAS

(Priest)

Madman, madman, leave the Temple!

JESUS

You beat the lowly with your fists. From the poor you take the last farthing. . . .

DATHAN

(Money Changer)

You are trying to deceive the people.

KORA
(Money Changer)

You are a magic-worker.

BOOZ
(Trader)

[*To the people.*] Do not listen to him. He hath devils. He is a lunatic. . . .

[*Confusion of cheers and hisses.*]

SEVERAL PERSONS

[*Simultaneously.*] Speak, Galilean. . . . You are speaking the truth. . . . The people want to hear the truth. . . . The traders do not want to hear it!

JESUS

Woe to them who make profit out of holy things! In the last days the sun shall hide away, the stars flee in terror, and the moon be red with blood! They that desecrate this house shall tremble in dark places. They shall be afraid! . . .

DATHAN
(Money Changer)

Silence, we will not listen to you any longer!

JOHN
(Disciple)

O, it will be terrible for the traders and changers in the last days!

DAVID
(Damascene)

We will hear him. He is a man of the people!

SEVERAL PERSONS

[*Simultaneously.*] Hear him! . . . Hear him! . . . Let him speak!

JACHIN
(Overseer)

Silence, silence! [*To Jesus.*] Blasphemer! . . . [*His voice is drowned in hisses and jeers.*]

PETER

[*Pulling away from them who had seized him, and lifting his hands to quiet the people.*] He will speak again. Listen!

JESUS

Within this house of prayer there are thieves walking in the cloaks of holy men. There are vipers that have learned to speak. They stand erect like men. They are evil. Woe to you that take bread from the mouths of the poor and clothe yourselves in fine linens! . . . [*Cheers.*]

BENJAMIN
(Trader)

[*To Jachin.*] Must we listen to these accursed lies?

SALA
(Trader)

[*To Jachin.*] Bid him go out upon the street. Something dreadful will happen here.

JACHIN
(Overseer)

Madman, your body is burning with devils. Leave the Temple! . . .

JESUS

I will not till all has been spoken, that you may know the day of judgment is near.

SEVERAL OF THE DISCIPLES

[*Simultaneously.*] He speaks the truth. . . . The judgment is near. . . . Yes, yes, it is near, . . . it is very near!

SARAS
(Scribe)

I have been told you are a Galilean. . . .

[*The crowd jeers. Jesus raises his hands and they quiet a little.*]

SARAS
(Scribe)

Have you heard of the Galileans whose blood Pilate mingled with the blood of their sacrifices? He slew them even yonder by the altar. Are you not afraid to cause this disturbance in the Temple?

JESUS

I have heard of it. But these Galileans that Pilate killed were not more sinful than others. I say to you that unless you yourself repent you shall surely die. The days of the evil are numbered. They are like the grass in the autumn. . . .

BENJAMIN

(Trader)

You, Galilean, surely know that our trading here is in accordance with the Law, and is authorized by the Council!

[*The crowd hisses.*]

JESUS

Woe to you traders and money changers that are rich! You have received your rewards. Woe to you that are full! You shall hunger. And you that laugh now, you shall mourn and weep! In the Temple I hear the grinding of a scythe. . . .

SARAS

(Scribe)

Are you trying to tell us that we shall die soon? Is that what you are trying to tell us?

JESUS

This generation shall not pass till the heavens be shaken, and the Son of Man appear. His

face shall shine like the dawn. His raiment shall be like the gold of the sun. He shall judge the world. Have you not read the prophets? . . .

SARAS
(Scribe)

Do you ask us who are scribes if we have read the prophets!

JESUS

You and your households shall know the famine and pestilence of the last days. You shall understand the fear of the sword. The wrath of God will destroy the wicked. It will cast them into darkness. . . .

JOSIAS
(Priest)

Madman of Galilee, you have a serpent's tongue. It is poisonous. [*The people hiss.*]

BOOZ
(Trader)

What — do you hiss a priest!

JESUS

O, repent before that hour, the hour of the anguish of fire and the sting of the sword! In the Temple I hear the singing of a scythe. It is the reaper of death. He is mowing.

SIMEON
(Scribe)

Tell us by what authority. . . .

SEVERAL PERSONS

[*Amid hisses.*] We will hear the Galilean! . . . Away with the traders! . . . Away with the money changer!

JESUS

[*Raising his hand.*] Let him speak.

SIMEON

By what authority do you come into the Temple and overthrow the Law and turn away the hearts of the people?

JESUS

Tear down this Temple, and in three days I will build a Temple not made by hands.

SIMEON

Forty-six years was this Temple in building, and you will rebuild it in three days?

JESUS

There shall be a new Temple and a new Jerusalem. But you cannot understand that. There be men standing here who shall not taste of death till they have seen them.

TERRENO

[*Away from the crowd, to Judah.*] Is he claiming to be a king?

JUDAH
(Scribe)

He is claiming to be a god.

[*Jachin is gathering together the guards and tenders.*]

BOOZ
(Trader)

[*Mounting a table of the money changers.*] Listen to me, all you people! This man is mad! He hath devils. [*The people hiss.*] Do you not see that by tricks of speech and a loud voice he is leading you away? The curse of Moses be upon him! [*The crowd jeers, drowning his voice.*] I will be heard! . . . [*The jeering continues.*]

[*Four men carrying large vessels are pushing their way through the Court. They are buffeted right and left by the people.*]

JOSIAS
(Priest)

[*At the top of his voice.*] Is it right that you abuse these vessel carriers? They are on their way to the Temple slaughtering house.

JESUS

It is terrible to defile this Court with bloody vessels. It is terrible to defile it with trade!

[*The guards and tenders endeavor to defend*

the vessel carriers from the buffets of the crowd. A hand to hand fight ensues, during which the vessels are taken from the carriers and thrown over the balustrade.]

DATHAN

(Money Changer)

Man of Galilee, restrain your followers!

JESUS

Out with you, thieves and robbers!

DAVID

(Damascene)

[*Amid the shouts of the crowd.*] We have found a leader! . . .

NATHAN

(Galilean)

We will follow him! . . .

MANY VOICES

[*Simultaneously.*] We will follow him! . . . Out with the traders! . . . Out with the slaughtering vessels! . . .

SALA

(Trader)

Prophet, hold back the people!

JESUS

I will not!

KORA
(Money Changer)

Hold back the people, else are the stones already chosen that shall bruise your flesh!

JESUS

Let the fox prowl upon the road, and the serpent in the grass. This Temple is for the children of the Lord!

PETER

This money changer [*pointing at Kora*] should be driven out!

JAMES
(Disciple)

Let us drive him out!

MANY VOICES

Out with Kora! Out with the money changers! . . .

[*There is great confusion and noise, pushing and pulling, and many blows are struck. David the Damascene, Nathan the Galilean, and others on the right; Peter, James, John, and the other disciples and followers of Jesus on the left; and Jesus in the center, advance, leading the people to left against the traders, money changers, guards, and tenders.*]

JACOB
(Dove Seller)

But don't you understand that these things are for the sacrifice? . . .

JESUS

Away with you!

[*The other dove sellers run out of the Court, their doves flying in all directions through the Temple. The tables of the money changers are overturned; and what coins they had not time to gather into bags, fall and roll over the floor.*]

DATHAN
(Money Changer)

Back, back, I say! . . . your hands off me, till I have gathered my money!

JACHIN
(Overseer)

Let the changers gather their coins! . . .

KORA
(Money Changer)

My money, my money! . . . Only let me gather my money, and I will go out!

JOSES
(Jesus' Brother)

[*Rushing up to Jesus.*] O brother, run away, run away! They will stone thee!

JESUS

[*Pushing him aside.*] Disturb me not now!

JOSES

Do you not know me? I am your brother. I am Joses.

JESUS

All these are my brothers! [*Pressing forward in front of the people and shouting, above the noise and tumult.*] We will give back this house to God! It is written, "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the people!" But you have made it a den of thieves! Away with you, deceivers of the people and betrayers of God! Neither gold nor silver nor fine linen will save you! The publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you! You do not believe that the day of repentance is here. The publicans and harlots believe! Out with you! Thieves and robbers! . . .

[*The crowd advances to left, pushing back the guards, tenders, traders, and money changers, who all the while utter cries of protestation. The pursuit continues until nearly all persons have passed off. The noise of many running oxen and the bleating of many frightened sheep mingle with the cries of the people.*]

A Person

[*Standing on a money changer's table and looking over the heads of the departing crowd.*] They are driving out the cattle! Some stricken with fear are running over the bridge!

Another Person

The sheep are running into the valley! An ox has plunged over the bridge into the valley! . . . another and another! It is terrible!

Another Person

They are throwing the bags of salt over the bridge and pouring out the oil! It is terrible! They will kill the traders! O, it is terrible! . . .

Another Person

Let us destroy the tables of the money changers!

Another

Let us throw them out of the Temple. [*They carry the tables to the balustrade, drop them into the road below, and hasten off.*]

[*At right enters Caiaphas, High Priest, followed by priests, Pharisees, scribes, and guards, all in a state of great excitement.*]

Amiel

(Priest)

Let the guards go around the Temple in opposite directions, and take him — if not alive, then dead!

LEVI
(Priest)

That is folly.

DARPHAS
(Priest)

The people will flee before the guards. Let us send them to take him.

CAIAPHAS
(High Priest)

He cannot be taken now. The people are led away. In their madness they would die for him.

AMIEL
(Priest)

Are we to see this blasphemer overthrow the authority of the Temple, and are we to do nothing?

CAIAPHAS
(High Priest)

Let their madness spend itself. We dare not touch him now unless he enter the Inner Temple.

LEVI
(Priest)

Shall we not send guards to watch at the inner gates?

CAIAPHAS
(High Priest)

Let them go at once and stand upon the utmost step of the Chel by the Flaming and Offer-

ing Gates. If he seek to enter, he must be taken, even if it cost a hundred lives. To-morrow — come close. [*They gather close around him.*] To-morrow no doubt he will come again. To-morrow we shall confound him, confuse him by many questions, make him ridiculous in the eyes of the people. What can he know of the Law? When once the people have laughed at him, you can take him as easily as a gardener plucks a weed from his garden, or as a slaughterer takes a sheep. We shall have a meeting of the Council at once. Come! . . .

[*All hasten off.*]

CURTAIN.

ACT II

DISPUTATIONS IN THE TEMPLE

PERSONS IN ACT II

JESUS
MARY, a Magdalene
MEIER, a Pharisee
HANNAN, a Herodian
JOSEPH, an Arimathean
TERRENO, Captain of the Roman Guards
JACHIN, an Overşeer of the Temple
NATHAN, a Galilean
ZARAH, a Jerusalemite
DAVID, a Damascene
JUDAS, PETER, JOHN, } Disciples of Jesus

DATHAN, KORA, JUBAL, } Money Changers
JUDAH, SIMEON, ZERA, SARAS, } Scribes
SHOLEM, LEVI, DARPHAS, JOSE, AMIEL, } Priests
BENJAMIN, BOOZ, ELEAZAR, SALA, EZRA, JACOB, } Traders

Temple guards and others.

ACT II

The scene is the same as Act I. The following morning.

[*At back Temple servants are cleaning. Booz enters, followed by Eleazar and Benjamin.*]

BOOZ
(Trader)

Sala and Ezra are going through the roads and through the Temple. They are gathering the traders and changers. They will bring them here.

BENJAMIN

Let us not stir up the people to-day. I am bruised and I ache.

BOOZ

We shall be men to-day. [*Takes a short sword from under his cloak.*]

ELEAZAR

Have care, Booz; we are but a handful. The people are many.

BOOZ

When the changers and the other traders come, we shall determine what is to be done. . . . All

night long his face disturbed my sleep. Is there not something the matter with his face?

ELEAZAR

His face is like wax that candles are made of.

BOOZ

His face is white like the face of a man who is chaste.

ELEAZAR

I have heard he has wives and maiden slaves in Galilee. I think he has the face of a man who has many women.

BOOZ

He has the face of a man who is chaste.

BENJAMIN

He looks like an Essene. They have nothing to do with women.

ELEAZAR

I wager he hath loosened the girdle of many maidens.

BOOZ

No, I am sure he is chaste. He hath the madness of a man who is chaste.

BENJAMIN

His voice was horrible. I never had heard a voice so horrible.

BOOZ

His voice was soft, such a voice as weak men obey.

BENJAMIN

No, his voice was not soft.

BOOZ

The priests and Levites in the Inner Temple say they did not hear his voice. They did not even know that there was any disturbance. . . . But his face was like one ready for the tomb. It was terrible!

ELEAZAR

It frightened me even to look upon his face.

[*Enter Sala, Ezra, Jacob, Kora, Jubal, Dathan, and several other traders and money changers.*]

SALA

(Trader)

We could not persuade any others to come. Many traders are themselves taking care of their sheep and oxen. Their tenders and helpers ran away in fear and have not returned.

EZRA

(Trader)

We met Jachin by the Cipunus Gate. He told us that no sheep and oxen may be brought into the Temple until permission has come from the Council.

DATHAN

(Money Changer)

The blood of Israel has turned to water! Even the Council obeys the madman who scattered my silver over the floor.

KORA

(Money Changer)

Let two watch at yonder passages, that none of the people come upon us suddenly and hear what we are saying.

[*Two go back and loiter near the balustrade.*]

BOOZ

First, we will demand payment of our losses from the Temple treasury.

SEVERAL OTHERS

We will. . . . We will demand payment.

BOOZ

Let every one hide a short sword beneath his cloak. Including our helpers we can count a hundred men. When once he lies bleeding on the floor, we will quiet any dispute by a hundred lifted swords. Are we agreed? [*A pause.*] You are silent. [*Another pause.*] I do not hear you say anything. Have you never noticed the glint of the sun on polished silver? Lightning is not as terrible as the glitter of a hundred suddenly lifted swords.

BENJAMIN

Strike him down here in the Temple!

BOOZ

Pilate set the example. He stained even yonder altar floor with human blood.

JACOB

(Trader)

But the Sanhedrin and the High Priest? . . .

BOOZ

Both would be happy. Even now they are trembling. They are afraid the Galilean will win over still more of the people. The Council probably sits this very hour, each member, like some old woman, frowning, threatening, and scolding. But words — words will neither subdue a madman nor instruct a fool.

SALA

They by the balustrade are waving. Some one is coming.

JUBAL

(Money Changer)

I agree with Booz. A little courage will restore the honor of the Temple, and moreover it will please the Sanhedrin. . . .

BOOZ

Wait, till we see who is coming.

[*Enter priests, scribes and Pharisees. They come forward.*]

DATHAN
(Money Changer)

[*Addressing them.*] Priests and Scribes, it is always good for us to see you. You are wise. But swords and spears are more needed here than wisdom and words.

JUBAL

We have been outraged, beaten, and our money taken.

SHOLEM
(An Old Priest)

We have heard.

BENJAMIN

Seven oxen lie dead in the valley. Two of them are mine.

BOOZ

Eleven of my sheep, and many belonging to others, are gone. Mine were costly sheep. They had grazed on the plains of Sharon.

JACOB

The doves of the traders have returned to the open air.

BOOZ

We will demand payment of our losses from the Temple treasury.

LEVI
(Priest)

Your claims are just, but we have no authority.

DARPHAS
(Priest)

The Council will surely pay them.

BOOZ

Gold and silver can not take away our dishonor. By the God of Abraham, with a sword I had fought my way through! . . .

KORA
(Money Changer)

And I. . . . Was the High Priest asleep while blasphemers ruled the Temple?

SHOLEM
(An Old Priest)

Peace, young men. . . .

BOOZ

We are speaking that you may know our minds. You doctors of the Law saw Moses and the prophets overturned, and you did not lift a hand!

SHOLEM

Peace, peace. . . .

BENJAMIN

Where were the Temple guards? Jachin could find only seven.

BOOZ

Is Jerusalem to be ruled by Nazareth? Is the fly to master the lion? Where is the blood of our fathers? Shall we look henceforth to Caiaphas or to Jesus?

JUDAH

(Scribe)

You are angered. You are saying foolish things.

BOOZ

I will speak that you may return and tell the Council the thoughts that burn in us. What need have we any longer of you scribes to teach us and our children the Law and traditions of our fathers? We have Jesus now. Ask the Council if we shall obey Moses or Jesus? And if they say Moses, then we demand protection in the Temple. Say that to the Council.

DATHAN

(Money Changer)

Last evening my sons mingled with the crowd upon the streets. They heard the name of their father cursed as if he had committed a crime against God.

JUBAL

(Money Changer)

Do we not pay more silver into the treasury than the rabble?

MEIER
(Pharisee)

The Council is now sitting. Guards are watching from the Porch on every side of the Temple. We will know when he enters. We shall be prepared. The Council will send a report to us. It will tell us what is to be done.

BOOZ

The Galilean is not to be beaten by a report. It would be better if we had swords. He may have many followers again if he comes to the Temple to-day. He may have more followers than yesterday.

MEIER

Think a moment, trader. If we arm against the people, will they not arm against us? God forbid! We do not want war. Cæsar is eager to tighten his grasp upon us. Pilate sits like a spider in the center of his web. The heathen all around us are watching like animals that are hungry.

BOOZ

We will arm ourselves. We can count more than a hundred men.

LEVI
(Priest)

To arm against him now is to arm against the people. That would be very foolish.

MEIER

Ridicule is better than a sword. This Galilean is ignorant of the Law and the prophets. Perhaps the Council will tell us to make the people laugh at him. We have talked with Caiaphas. He is explaining it to the Council.

DARPHAS

(Priest)

I have a ridiculous question about the resurrection of the dead which I shall ask him. . . .

MEIER

[*Interrupting.*] I am a Pharisee. I believe the dead will arise.

DARPHAS

(Priest)

It is foolish. The dead will never arise.

MEIER

Yes, I am sure the dead will arise.

DARPHAS

(Priest)

Perhaps some Herodian will lead him into a speech against Rome. We have sent for the Roman captain, that he may hear him should he pronounce doctrines hateful to Cæsar.

JUDAH

(Scribe)

It even has been told us that he may try to

make the people believe he is Messias, at least that he may intimate he is Messias.

LEVI
(Scribe)

We could not desire anything better than that.

JUDAH
(Scribe)

He himself will make the people laugh at him. It would be foolish enough if he claimed to be a prophet risen from the dead; but to try to tell people he is Messias — is it not laughable? You do not need any swords. The people are unlearned, but they are wise in such matters. Give them time, they will find out a fool.

DATHAN
(Money Changer)

I think that the traders should drive back their animals into the Temple, and that we should bring back our tables and change money as before.

LEVI
(Scribe)

It would not be wise.

DATHAN
(Money Changer)

He may not return to-day. Perhaps he is afraid to return to-day.

MEIER
(Pharisee)

He will return. He is like a man who has drunk much wine.

SALA
(Trader)

This is our last day for profit. On the streets competition is terrible.

EZRA
(Trader)

The cheap traders on the streets sell at any price. Their animals are not as good as ours. We will lose money if we are not permitted to bring our sheep and oxen back into the Temple.

BOOZ
(Trader)

These men are right. We should drive back the animals and sell as before. But we should be armed with short swords hidden under our cloaks — we and all our helpers. The arguments of polished silver are stronger than the arguments of polished words.

[*Several persons enter at back.*]

LEVI
(Priest)

These come from the Council to instruct us. Come, Judah, Meier, Sholem. . . .

[*The priests, scribes, and Pharisees retire to the rear and continue in conference with persons just entered; among them is Joseph the Arimathean, who after listening a few moments, walks away.*]

BOOZ

[*To the other traders and changers.*] We must hasten. Before long the people will be coming. You that are unarmed go home and arm yourselves. Arm your helpers and tenders. No one can tell what will happen here. There may be a way open for us to reach him. The Council cannot instruct us to do the thing, but it will thank us after it is done. Let the Council use words. Our arguments, harder and sharper than words, will be hidden under our cloaks.

DATHAN

I need not go home, I am armed.

JUBAL

And I.

BENJAMIN

And I and my tenders.

ELEAZAR

I also and mine.

ALL EXCEPT JACOB AND EZRA

And I and I. . . .

[*Jacob and Ezra start off.*]

BOOZ

Wait. A word before Jacob and Ezra go. Should there come to us a chance to strike him down, let us not do as the Romans did in the time of our forefathers. I have heard it said that when they struck down the great Cæsar, they were so eager and so frightened that some of their ill-directed thrusts fell upon each other.

[*Jacob and Ezra go off at right.*]

SALA

I hate Rome as much as any of you; yet I think it absurd to compare Cæsar with a dirty Galilean. It was Julius Cæsar whom they killed — was it not?

KORA

Do you hear some one singing in the valley? [*They listen.*]

DATHAN

I do not hear anything.

BOOZ

Some one go quickly to the bridge and look into the valley. We must know when the people come. I shall go to the balustrade.

[*Sala hastens out at left and Booz retires to back:*]

DATHAN

I shall change money when the people come. Look. [*He produces, from under his cloak, a*

large purse, fastened over his shoulder.] The other changers will do the same. If we change money here, you traders can gather patrons here. Bring your animals as near the gate as possible.

[*Booz returns from back, followed immediately by Levi; and presently by others, priests, scribes and Pharisees.*]

BOOZ

I could not see a crowd anywhere. Many persons in small groups are coming toward the Temple. But they are not making any noise.

LEVI

(Priest)

We are prepared. Let the Galilean come. [*All gather round him.*] We ask, in the name of the Council of the Sanhedrin, that none to-day arouse the people, or say aught to arouse this Jesus and his disciples. Furthermore, your losses the Council has chosen to allow.

BOOZ

The Council has judged it wise to bow before the Galilean rebel! God of Abraham! . . .

JUDAH

(Scribe)

Look upon us, traders and changers. Are we children? Long and patient years have we studied the Law and the prophets. The San-

hedrin has chosen us, of all others, to confound him who yesterday defamed this house of God. We shall lead him by the nose before all the people. Moreover, we shall make him Cæsar's prisoner.

[*A few persons enter at back.*]

LEVI

Let us not stand here together, lest suspicion arise.

[*More persons enter, among them Judas. From now on there is an ever increasing stream coming and going. Here and there the changers may be seen quietly changing money from the purses carried under their cloaks; and the traders likewise quietly talking to prospective purchasers, leading some to left, toward where the animals now stand, outside the Temple, beyond the Shushan Gate. The Court is more orderly and quieter than the day before.*]

MEIER

(Pharisee)

[*Calling.*] Iscariot, Iscariot!

[*Judas comes to Meier.*]

MEIER

Will your master come to the Temple to-day?

JUDAS

Last night, in the shadow of the trees, he prayed long to his Father.

MEIER

What did he pray?

JUDAS

That his Father might give him strength still to fight with the evil in the Temple. Therefore, I think he will come again to-day.

MEIER

Did he pray anything else?

JUDAS

He prayed a long time that his Father hasten the hour of judgment, lest the seeds of wickedness poison all Israel. I never have heard such sobs in the night. We came to him. He sent us away, and bade us not disturb him. I could not sleep, and I arose while it was yet dark, and came alone into the city.

MEIER

Was he not a tentmaker or a builder, as his father before him? Some say he was a sandal-maker, others that he was a cameldriver. What was his father's name?

JUDAS

He was a carpenter, as his father. His father's name was Joseph. I never knew him. He is dead.

MEIER

Iscariot, look at me.

JUDAS

What is it?

MEIER

Is he really Messias?

JUDAS

Rabbi, all I possessed I gave to the poor and followed him. As we left the Sea of Galilee only a few weeks ago, he bade them among us that still had boats and nets to give them away. This they did. He said we might never come back. None of us now have anything. Day after day, in the sunlight of the fields, and in the shadow of the woods and on the mountain side, and night after night, under the stars, he told us that the end of the troubled world was near. And we believed him. We have sat and contended with the elders in the gates of many cities. Often we wandered from the time of the shepherd's rising till he calls his sheep in the evening twilight. Every one we passed he stopped and told of the coming of the Lord.

MEIER

Did anybody believe him?

JUDAS

Many listened eagerly, and many there were

that believed him. But here in Jerusalem there is building of new houses, and marrying, and riding in gilded chariots, and gathering of money, as if no one believes Messias would ever come. Here women adorn themselves in silver and gold and pearls, as if they were the favorite slaves of heathen kings. Here men go about in fine linens of many colors, their mouths filled with laughter and wine, as if the anger of the Lord were yet far off. Here none will believe he is the Son of Man. You, Rabbi, heard them mock me.

MEIER

He was master here yesterday.

JUDAS

What will happen when he tells the people he is Messias? Will they believe him? Here in Jerusalem everything is different. Every one talks about God, but no one thinks about Him. Every one says Messias is coming, but no one believes he is coming. Jerusalem staggereth like a man that is drunk.

MEIER

How can you speak so? Have you never heard how our forefathers, sitting by the rivers of Babylon, wept as they remembered Zion? . . . You are troubled, Iscariot.

JUDAS

Many times he told us that the Lord will appear in the clouds and declare him master of Israel. He told us that we shall sit by his side in glory and judge the people. We believed and have followed him, as children follow their mother. Days and months have passed, and it is again Spring. But the Lord has not yet appeared; and we are only a band of wanderers, poorly clad and often without food.

MEIER

You are troubled, Iscariot.

JUDAS

We do not eat and drink at any king's table, as he often has said we should. But we have sat at the table with hunger, and we are acquainted with the face of scorn. Several times in Galilee it was told us that soldiers were on their way to seize us. We have scattered like sheep that have no shepherd. We have hidden in the woods and among the rocks, like wild goats that fear the teeth of young lions.

MEIER

It is a hard life, Iscariot.

JUDAS

We often have sat in the night under the open sky and listened to him. His voice is like music

in the night. It is like the voice of a shepherd calling his sheep that have scattered. It is like far away music, soft and low. Sometimes he spoke to us and sometimes to his Father, just a little beyond the stars. And we almost have seen his Father, and almost have heard the angels singing beautiful songs of the world that shall be.

MEIER

It is wonderful, Iscariot.

JUDAS

One night when the moon looked like a silver shield, and the stars like blossoms in a field, our brother disciple John thought he saw the Father, and giving forth a loud cry, he gave up his ghost, and fell as if lifeless into the arms of the master. But here in Jerusalem everything is different. Our master must show his Father to the people. He must do something wonderful by the hand of the Lord.

MEIER

Then will I too follow him. But if he fail, and the Lord will not hear him, how can he still say he is Messias?

JUDAS

He cannot. If he fail, I will go back to Kerioth after the Feast. I will remember his love and forget his madness.

MEIER

Let us make him give proof that God is his Father. Does he not say that God is his father?

JUDAS

He says that.

MEIER

Let us make him give proof his words will reach the ear of God, and the heavens open at his voice, and the hand of God stretch down to help him. One sign from the clouds and Jerusalem will be at his feet, and you and all his followers will know the glory that he told you of.

JUDAS

How will you make him give a sign?

MEIER

Soldiers might lay hold of him. . . .

JUDAS

No, no!

MEIER

Wait till I have finished. He might be brought before the Sanhedrin or before Pilate, and a sign demanded of him. If he perform a great miracle, all will believe in him — O gladly believe in him! But it must not be a trick.

JUDAS

You do not know him, Rabbi.

MEIER

We must see the hand of God.

JUDAS

Yes, we must see the hand of God. I think he will show us the hand of God.

MEIER

If he be held a prisoner, we shall see if God will release him.

JUDAS

But should he fail, and God not hear his cries? . . .

MEIER

Everybody will know of it, and he can no longer deceive the people. Probably he will go back to Nazareth and you to Kerioth — both wiser.

JUDAS

You will not let any harm be done him?

MEIER

No hand shall touch him ruthlessly. Let him lift himself up and ride a little on the clouds. How then could the people deny him?

JUDAS

They could not.

MEIER

The people will honor you. Our children's

children will tell how you forced God to show himself. Your glory will be great. You will be numbered with the prophets.

JUDAS

I will help you, Rabbi. I do not care anything about glory. I am very tired. I grieve for the kingdom, for a world of peace and love. . . .

MEIER

We will help each other. [*They embrace and kiss.*] Iscariot, go yonder and look out upon the valley, and see if he is coming.

[*Judas goes off at left. Terreno, the captain of the Roman guards, scribes, Pharisees and priests, who have been waiting at a little distance, approach Meier.*]

TERRENO

The guards are ready in the Tower. I need only lift my hand and they will rush down upon the Temple. But I will not lift my hand to crush a mouse, nor to defend traders and money changers, nor priests and Doctors of the Law against a rebellious teacher.

LEVI

(Priest)

But if he is an enemy of Rome, a planter of revolutionary seed, a builder of secret fires? . . .

TERRENO

I know he is an enemy of Israel. I have not heard him say anything against Rome. Yesterday he snapped his finger in your faces.

LEVI

To-day he will snap his finger at Cæsar.

MEIER

He must not be taken as long as the people cling to him.

LEVI

We do not want another fight in the Temple.

MEIER

He has some strange charm that binds the people. Grown men that listen to him often, like young lovers, gaze much at the moon.

TERRENO

He is ugly to look upon. His face is horrible. How can the people cleave to one whose face is so horrible? It is the face of a dead man, a face of ivory crowned with matted hair. I think he is underfed, a seer of strange visions. He should eat more. I think he does not sleep enough. His eyes are like glass. When he speaks he whines like a fox that is wooing.

LEVI

It is said his voice was like thunder yesterday,

or like the roaring of young lions in the mountains.

[*The Court is rapidly filling with people, but not so many as yesterday. Jachin, overseer, hastily approaches the group.*]

JACHIN

Worthy fathers, the traders are clamoring to bring back their animals into the Court. Upon the street there are many more competitors and prices are low.

LEVI

Tell them to be silent.

JACHIN

They say he will not come again to-day. They have gathered many persons to their side. There are secret mutterings. They say he is afraid to come again to-day.

SHOLEM

(Old Priest)

Tell them to cease clamoring in the house of God.

LEVI

Tell them the Council forbids any disturbance. Tell them it is dangerous to disobey the Council.

JACHIN

I told them that. They laughed and said, "Jesus of Nazareth did not find the Council dan-

gerous. Perhaps if we pay him the Temple rent, he will permit us to drive back our sheep and oxen."

SHOLEM

These traders weary me.

MEIER

They are like flies about a carcass.

[*Booz, with money changers and other traders, approaches the group.*]

BOOZ

We are going to drive back our sheep and oxen into the Temple.

JUDAH

(Scribe)

[*Indignant.*] The Council forbids it!

BOOZ

We have paid the rent to sell in the Temple. There is no one here to prevent us. This is the day of all the year for trade. We cannot lose this day. To-morrow everything is over. To-morrow is the Feast. We shall drive the animals in again.

LEVI

[*To Jachin.*] Have the guards seen any approaching procession as yesterday?

JACHIN

There is no procession coming.

MEIER

Are they watching toward the Mount of Olives?

JACHIN

They are watching toward the Mount of Olives. But they are confused. They cannot remember his face.

BOOZ

He will not come again to-day. We will drive in our animals. He is afraid to come again to-day.

A LOUD VOICE

[*Among the people, near the center of the Court.*] O sheep, hear the shepherd lest you be devoured! In the Temple crawls the serpent and behind the door the wolf is hidden! . . .

[*The scribes, Pharisees, and traders startle. There is a pause.*]

TERRENO

[*Smiling.*] It is the voice of the fox.

[*The people give way, and for a moment Jesus stands alone in the center.*]

BOOZ

We could take him now.

LEVI

[*Aside to Booz.*] Stand away. [*Aside to the*

Pharisees, priests, and scribes.] Now let each do his duty, neither overanxiously nor carelessly.

JOSEPH
(Arimathean)

[*Walking away.*] I wash my hands of this.

LEVI

You did that in the Council yesterday.

JESUS

[*In a loud voice as before.*] The evil men do in darkness shall be seen in daylight. They shall tremble and be trodden under foot. They shall be pierced by the sword!

SHOLEM
(Old Priest)

Is he referring to the traders?

BOOZ
(Trader)

He is referring to the priests.

A VOICE IN THE CROWD

It is Jesus of Nazareth!

THE DISCIPLES AND OTHERS

Hear Jesus, . . . the friend of the people! . . . He drove out the traders! . . . He is going to speak! . . . Hear him! . . .

[*Jesus moves forward, followed by Peter, John, James, and other of his disciples. Many persons*

gather round him; among them the scribes, Pharisees, elders, and priests. Throughout the following, at various intervals, in the background, the traders may be seen arguing with David the Damascene, Zarah the Jerusalemite, Nathan the Galilean, and others who are guarding the places and passages formerly occupied by the traders. Booz and Dathan mingle in the crowd around Jesus, often standing very near him.]

PETER

Master, see the traders near the balustrade.

JAMES

They want to lead their cattle back.

MATTHEW

They say they have paid the rent and will lead them back.

JESUS

[*Vehemently.*] Already their sins are as mountains! If they repent not they shall be cast into the valley of filth, to be eaten by worms. They shall sleep in the dust. They shall be withered by fire! Woe unto you traders and changers that lust after silver and gold! . . .

[*Cries of approbation from the people.*]

LEVI

(Priest)

Rabbi, who gave you authority to say what

shall be done and what shall not be done here in the Temple?

SEVERAL VOICES

[*Amid hisses.*] We will hear Jesus! . . .

A SADDUCEE

[*Angered.*] Have we no longer any respect for our priests?

ANOTHER

It is Levi that asks a question.

JESUS

[*Raising his hand to the people.*] Let him speak.

LEVI

(Priest)

I ask by what authority you do these things here in the Temple?

JESUS

Tell me from whence John received his authority to baptize — was it from God or from man?

LEVI

John? Do you mean him the Tetrarch slew — him called the Baptist?

JESUS

The same.

LEVI

I was speaking of you, not the Baptist.

JESUS

If you answer me, I will answer you.

[*Levi, Meier, and Judah whisper a moment among themselves.*]

LEVI

I cannot tell from whence John received his authority.

JESUS

Then I will not tell you from whence I received mine. But I will ask you another question. A man had two sons whom he bade to work in his vineyard. The first said, "I will not go," but afterwards repented and went. The second said, "I go," but went not. Which of the two did his father's will?

LEVI

The first.

JESUS

Therefore, I tell you that the tax gatherers and harlots will go into the kingdom of God before you. They by their shameful lives rebelled, but afterwards repented and went into their Father's vineyard. You rebel not, but you go not.

JOSE
(Old Priest)

[*To Terreno, standing by his side on the outer edge of the crowd.*] What is he saying now?

TERRENO

I think he is saying that scribes and priests are not as good as tax gatherers and harlots.

JOSE

O it is shameful!

[*The scribes, Pharisees, elders, priests, and their followers, look questioningly upon one another, and for a moment move about Jesus in a threatening manner.*]

BOOZ

[*Agitated, to Jesus.*] Do you dare to talk so to a priest!

[*Levi motions Booz to be silent.*]

JESUS

[*To the people.*] Will you hear another parable?

SEVERAL VOICES

We will hear! . . . Tell us another parable!

JESUS

A man made a vineyard — planted vines, dug a wine press, built a tower — and set hedge all around it. Then he let it to vinedressers, and he went into another country. . . .

MEIER

(Pharisee)

[*Interrupting.*] Is this a new parable?

JESUS

It has not been told before.

MEIER

[*With an air of triumph.*] It was told by the prophet Isaiah.

JESUS

Thus far it is like to that told by the prophet; but I have not finished. . . . And when the season came and the man sent for his portion of the fruit, the vinedressers beat his servant and drove him away empty. He sent another and they struck him on the head; and still another, whom they killed. Then he sent his beloved son. They killed him also. When the lord of the vineyard comes, what will he do to these vinedressers?

LEVI

No doubt he will destroy them and let the vineyard to others.

JESUS

O you — all of you, repent before the Lord of the vineyard shall come — O you that kill the prophets and reject the Son of the Lord of the vineyard! The days of the world are numbered like the days of a man that is old! . . .

[*The people murmur approval.*]

LEVI

Are you trying to tell us that you are the beloved Son of the Lord of the vineyard? Are you telling us that you are Messias?

[*Jesus is silent.*]

MEIER

Rabbi, are you not really a carpenter who lived awhile at Cana? Was not your father's name Joseph? And was he not a carpenter before you?

JESUS

[*In a loud voice.*] O men of Jerusalem, you are like the builders that reject the stone which was afterwards set up as the top-stone of the house! O men of Jerusalem, you that kill the prophets and stone them that are sent to you, how often would I have gathered you together, as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings; but you would not! Unless you change your ways, the Lord will not come again to this Temple of Israel. I also will forsake you until you shall say to me, "Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord."

[*The people show some confusion, many of them questioning one another.*]

JOSE

(Old Priest)

[*To Terreno.*] Does he deny that he is a carpenter?

TERRENO

I think he is saying that he is Messias.

JOSE

O shame, . . . blásphemy!

JUDAH

(Scribe)

[*To Jesus.*] Master, which is the first of all the commandments? Many and long hours have we contended in the schools to classify, weigh, and measure the order of the Laws. Do you lean toward the opinions of the Shammaites or Hillelites? Or perhaps you lean toward neither.

JESUS

The first commandment is, " You shall love the Lord with all your heart." And like it is this, " You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

JUDAH

But, Master, who is my neighbor? The world is big and there are many people. Will you give us your authorities that these are the first commandments? Will you lead us step by step through the ways of your reasoning, naming the sages whose opinions you follow, and where and why you depart from that one and cling to this one?

[*A pause. Jesus shows irritation.*]

JOHN
(Disciple)

Master, tell him the parable of the Samaritan as you told it to us.

JAMES
(Disciple)

Tell him, Master, then he will understand who is his neighbor.

JESUS

Once a man was going from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers. They stripped him and beat him, leaving him half dead. By chance a priest passed that way; and when he saw the man he went on the other side. . . .

JUDAH
(Scribe)

[*Interrupting.*] I did not ask you for a tale or parable. I asked you for the authorities and for the steps of reasoning by which you came to your opinion as to which commandment is first and which second and so on. I asked for the names of the great Rabbis whose teachings you follow.

SEVERAL DISCIPLES

Master, go on with the story! . . . We will hear the parable!

JESUS

And a Levite also, when he came to the place, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan came upon the man and pitied him. He bound up his wounds, and set him on his own horse, and brought him to an inn, and cared for him. And the next day he took money from his own pocket and gave it to the host, saying, "Care for him, and if more is needed, I will repay you when I return again." [*Turning to Judah.*] Which of these three was neighbor to him that fell among thieves?

[*Judah is silent.*]

SEVERAL VOICES

The Samaritan! . . . the Samaritan! . . .

SIMEON

(Scribe)

[*Standing at one side of the crowd. To Zera, scribe, and Joseph the Arimathean.*] I think he is too ignorant to be confounded. See how he evaded Judah's question.

ZERA

He knows little of the Law, less of the prophets, and nothing of what the great scribes have taught. He is ignorant, but shrewd. If he had at least a little learning, they might easily make him ridiculous.

SIMEON

They have not made any progress yet. Judah was too urgent; he irritated the people.

ZERA

See, Meier is again pressing in toward him.

SIMEON

And with him Saras. They have been whispering together. I do not always agree with Saras, but there is no more learned man in Jerusalem. He will confound him.

JOSEPH

(Arimathean)

I shall have no joy in it. He is filled with a great love. Is there so much love in the world? . . . [*They continue talking and disputing among themselves.*]

SARAS

(Scribe)

[*To Jesus.*] Rabbi, the prophets have told us that Messias will be a descendant of King David and will be born at Bethlehem.

MEIER

(Pharisee)

Perhaps we have misjudged you. Perhaps you really do not make any claim for yourself. Tell us, is it not true that you were born at Nazareth

and that your father was a carpenter named Joseph?

JESUS

If Messias shall be a son of David, why did David — speaking of him — call him Lord? Does a father call his son lord? Messias is not to be a son of David.

SARAS

But the prophets say that Messias will be of the seed of David and will be born at Bethlehem.

MEIER

Do you believe the prophets?

JESUS

[*In a loud voice.*] O you scribes and Pharisees that question me, you read the Law and the prophets, but you follow after worldly things! You clean the outside of the cup and platter, but the inside you leave unclean! . . .

[*Some of the crowd murmur approval, others walk away in disgust.*]

DAVID
(Damascene)

Here are two traders muttering threats and pushing the people about.

ANDREW
(Disciple)

They are talking and annoying everybody.

[*Several persons lay hands on Booz and Dathan.*]

NATHAN
(Galilean)

Jesus, shall we cast them out?

SEVERAL PERSONS

They are two that fought us yesterday! . . . Let us put them out, . . . throw them over the balustrade! . . . They were muttering threats!

JESUS

Let them stay unharmed.

JAMES
(Disciple)

But, Master, they are evil, they are sinful men!

JESUS

Let them stay.

[*Booz and Dathan are released, and they disappear. A little later they return and may be seen on the outer edge of the crowd.*]

DARPHAS
(Priest)

[*Surrounded by other Sadducees. To Jesus.*] I am a Sadducee. I do not believe in angels, spirits, and the resurrection of the dead, as do the Pharisees. I have been told, Rabbi, that you believe the dead arise. But how can this be? Moses has commanded that should a man die

childless, his brother should marry his widow and bring up children. Now listen to this. There were seven brothers. The first married and died childless. The second married his widow, as Moses commanded, and he likewise died childless. And the third married her and died without a child, and the fourth, and so on until the seventh, none bringing forth any children. After that the woman died. If the dead arise, whose wife of the seven brothers shall she be?

PETER

[*Indignant.*] It is not a true story. Who were the brothers? Where did they live? What were their names?

DARPHAS

(Priest)

It has happened many times with two or three brothers.

AMIEL

(Priest)

We can give the names of such a case with four brothers.

DARPHAS

What does it matter? It might happen to seven brothers. It is the same whether it happen to two, three, or seven. I ask whose wife shall she be in the other world? Is it not absurd? Make a picture of the seven brothers tugging at

her in Paradise, each claiming her for himself.

[*The Sadducees laugh.*]

AMIEL

If the fourth get her, will not the others plot against him? If the first persuade her, saying, "I knew her first," will not the seventh say, "I knew her last"?

DARPHAS

Might not the fifth, with these same arguments, truly contend against them both, saying that she was his wife after she belonged to the first and before she belonged to the seventh? It is absurd!

AMIEL

Or shall she live with the seven, each in turn? Or shall they divide her into seven parts?

[*The Sadducees laugh.*]

DARPHAS

Or shall each address his love to only a seventh part of her living? Which will take a hand and which a foot? And shall they draw lots, each for a part of her?

[*More laughter in which many of the people join.*]

DARPHAS

Is it not absurd? But what say you, Master, whose wife shall she be? And how shall each be satisfied?

JESUS

[*Irritated.*] You do not understand the scriptures! In the world of the kingdom of the resurrection there is no marriage. The people of the resurrection are not men and women like the people of this world. They are like the angels.

THOMAS
(Disciple)

Master, the Sadducees have ceased to laugh.

[*A ripple of laughter at the Sadducees goes over the people. Darphas and Amiel retreat from Jesus. On the outside of the crowd stands Simeon, Zera, Jose and Terreno.*]

SIMEON

Everything has failed. But the Herodians will trap him. They will ask him if it is right for us to pay taxes to Cæsar.

ZERA

If he says "Yes," the people will hate him and desert him, for the people hate the taxes. If he says "No," he is in revolt against Cæsar.

JOSE

It is wonderful. Either way he cannot escape.

TERRENO

If he declares against the taxes, I shall ask the Governor to let us take him to-night.

SIMEON

He condemned the Temple authorities yesterday. He will condemn Cæsar to-day, you shall see. He knows what pleases the people. If everything else fails, Levi and I are to question him about a woman.

[*Terreno moves quickly into the crowd and stands a little way back of Jesus.*]

PETER

[*To the crowd.*] Do not press so closely upon him. Stand back a little.

[*The crowd moves back.*]

HANAN
(Herodian)

[*To Jesus.*] Rabbi, we believe you understand the ways of God; and that you teach the truth as you understand it, regardless of the opinions of any man. Only yesterday we were again discussing whether it is lawful and right that we here in Judea pay personal taxes to Cæsar. In Galilee you do not pay personal taxes to Cæsar.

ZARAH
(Jerusalemite)

That is a sensible question, and Jesus will answer it sensibly.

OTHER PERSONS

We want no more Roman taxes! . . . Jesus of Nazareth stands by the people! . . .

HANAN

[*To Jesus.*] Is it lawful and right for us in Jerusalem and Judea, and even for the half-Jews in Samaria, to pay this tribute to Rome? You are said to love what is lawful and just. Is this tax lawful and just?

SEVERAL PERSONS

Jesus stands by the people! . . . We want no more foreign taxes! . . . Let him answer! . . .

JESUS

[*Raising his hand to silence the people.*] I know why you ask me this question. It is not because I love justice. Around me prowl wolves among the sheep. Around me are pointed teeth and sharpened swords. Back of me stands a Roman captain. Yonder is the Tower of Antonia, full of Roman soldiers. But I will answer. My Father is guarding me, and I have no fear. Let me see a Roman coin. Have you one? [*Coming closer to Hanan. Angered.*] You — you who question me! show me a Roman coin.

HANAN

[*Taking a coin from his purse.*] Here is a denarius.

JESUS

[*Examining it.*] Look at this. [*Showing it*

to Hanan.] Whose image is this? Whose inscription is this?

HANAN

But is it not unlawful for us to carry about the image of a heathen? It is Cæsar's image.

JESUS

Then give back to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's. Is it not his coin? And give to God the things that are God's. . . . [*In a loud voice.*] O men of Jerusalem, who waste words, louder and louder I hear in the Temple the singing of the scythe of the reaper of death! The sky shall be torn open and the earth be cleansed by fire. Contend not over little things, for they are as a breath; but make clean your hearts ere the terror of the day of judgment.

[*Some of the people at the back push forward trying to hear and understand what Jesus is saying.*]

MATTHEW

[*Calling to them.*] He has answered. He says give to Cæsar what is his, and to God what is His.

[*On one side of the crowd some of the scribes, Pharisees and priests are standing in conference.*]

TERRENO

[*As he passes them on his way out of the Court.*] He has beaten you.

ZERA

(Scribe)

He does not answer like an honest man.

SARAS

(Scribe)

When he is confused, he changes the subject and talks loud to assure the crowd.

DARPHAS

(Priest)

He is altogether ridiculous.

ZERA

He will fall yet. He mingles freely with outcasts and harlots. He will be shown one presently, and if he cleaves to her and defends her, the people will turn from him. Tarry but a little longer.

TERRENO

He is slippery like an eel and cunning like a fox. [*Contemptuously.*] He has beaten you. [*Passes off.*]

[*Meier and Judas, who have been standing together for a short time, pass off, engaged in earnest conversation. Presently at back and left*

loud cries are heard, and there begins to be angry pushing and pulling in the crowd.]

BOOZ
(Trader)

[*At back.*] Call the soldiers, the people are fighting.

BENJAMIN
(Trader)

Call the Romans to bring order!

DATHAN
(Money Changer)

[*Hiding behind the others.*] Seize the leaders! . . . Call the soldiers from the Tower!

[*The money changers and traders and their followers may be seen agitating the people, and now and then striking a blow.*]

JESUS

[*In a loud voice.*] Must we again drive out the traders?

MANY VOICES

The traders are provoking the people! . . . Let us drive them out again! . . . Let us throw them over the balustrade! . . . Away with the traders! . . . Here are the two who caused the fight yesterday, . . . let us take them!

[*The crowd menacingly turns its attention to*

back. Booz and Dathan rush off at left, followed by other agitators.]

SEVERAL VOICES

Let us overtake them! . . . Come, . . . come!

JAMES

Master, shall we overtake them?

JESUS

[*Standing before the people.*] Peace, peace, they are gone!

[*At right and back another disturbance has arisen. Temple guards, followed by scribes and priests, are partly leading and partly dragging a woman through the crowd. When they reach the circle that has again gathered around Jesus they thrust her within. She sinks to her knees, hiding her face in her arms, and crying pitifully.*]

GUARD

Silence, woman! How can anybody hear anything when you are making so much noise? Silence, I say!

[*The woman endeavors to smother her sobs. The eager crowd gathers close about.*]

SIMEON

(Scribe)

[*Excited and indignant. To Jesus.*] She is an adulteress!

LEVI
(Priest)

The guards said she was taken in the very act.

GUARD

[*To prostrate woman, still weeping.*] Silence, silence, woman!

SIMEON

The man was a gentile. [*Turning to the guard.*] Was he not a gentile?

GUARD

It happened last night. The guards that took her said they could not see very well. The man ran away. But they are almost sure he was a gentile.

MANY PERSONS

Shame! . . . Shame! . . .

SIMEON

[*To Jesus.*] She has dishonored our race. You know the Law. You know what Moses commanded us to do with such a woman!

LEVI

He commanded us to stone her!

SIMEON

Jesus, what do you say we shall do with her?
[*A pause.*]

JESUS

I am not appointed to judge her. What difference would it make if I say, "Set her free," or, "Stone her"?

LEVI

We want to hear your opinion about adulteresses. Do you not sometimes mingle with them and sup with them and in the night . . .

JESUS

[*Aroused.*] Do you ask me to judge her?

SIMEON

We want the people to hear what you think about adulteresses. If the people approve your judgment, who knows but that they may give it the power of Law and fulfill it? Such things have been. Shall we set her free or shall we bruise her flesh with stones till she die?

[*The woman, still prostrate and hiding her face, again cries aloud pitifully.*]

GUARD

[*Jerking her by the arm.*] Silence, silence, I say!

LEVI

What do you answer, Nazarene, shall she live or die?

[*There is a moment's suspense.*]

SEVERAL VOICES

Take her away! . . . Let her not defile the Temple! . . . She is horrible!

[*All eyes turn upon Jesus. He stands looking down upon her.*]

THE WOMAN

[*Amid sobs.*] O do not look at me! Do not look at me!

GUARD

Silence, woman!

SIMEON

Prophet of Galilee, what do you say we shall do with her? You do not answer.

JESUS

[*In a loud voice.*] Stone her!

[*Some of the people appear moved by astonishment and repulsion.*]

A VOICE

We do not stone adulteresses any longer.

PETER

Master, Master, surely not kill her?

JAMES

(Disciple)

Master, what has happened? Have you turned against the lowly?

[*The other disciples, confused, clamor around Jesus.*]

SIMEON
(Scribe)

We will stone her! [*Turning to the people.*] Do you hear? We will stone her! Your prophet has commanded us to stone her!

GUARD

[*Moving to seize the woman.*] Where shall we take her to be killed?

JESUS

We will kill her here in the Temple! Fetch stones!

MANY PERSONS

No, . . . no! . . . We will not stone her! . . . It is horrible! . . . It is terrible to stone a woman! . . . Cast her out! . . .

[*On all sides are movements of dissatisfaction and cries of protest.*]

JESUS

[*In a loud voice.*] We will kill her! Fetch stones!

A VOICE

The Nazarene is right! Adulteresses should die!

SEVERAL VOICES

She shall die! . . . We will kill her!

OTHER VOICES

No, no! . . . Cast her out! . . . We will not kill her! . . .

JESUS

[*Lifting his hands.*] Silence! Silence! . . . Let him who is without sin stand forth, for he shall throw the first stone at her!

[*The agitation quiets a little. The people seem confused.*]

A VOICE

Without sin! — what does he mean?

ANOTHER

No one is without sin!

ANOTHER

Who then shall throw the first stone?

ANOTHER

No one shall throw it!

[*The tension of the crowd relaxes still more.*]

ANOTHER

Perhaps a trader or a money changer will cast the first stone at her.

[*Some laughter.*]

ANOTHER

Unless the scribes and Pharisees stand forth and say they are without sin. . . .

ANOTHER

No one dare say he is without sin!

JESUS

[*Angered.*] O scribes and Pharisees, why do you not stand forth? Is there among you no sinless hand to bruise her flesh? See, she is lowly and friendless. . . .

SEVERAL VOICES

No one dare stand forth! . . . No. . . . No. . . . No one! . . .

JESUS

O scribes and Pharisees, you are like sepulchres that are made white and beautiful outside, but inside are full of stench and dead men's bones!

[*Cheers and hisses. Most of the scribes, Pharisees, priests and elders, in disgust, leave the Court.*]

JESUS

[*Calling after them.*] You build the sepulchres of the prophets and garnish the tombs of the righteous. You say if you had lived in the times of your fathers you would not have murdered the prophets. By that you witness that you are the sons of them that murdered the prophets. Fill up then the measure of your fathers.

[*The disciples and followers cheer. Other*

persons hasten from the Court, as if fearing another outbreak.]

JESUS

[*Savagely.*] You serpents, you offsprings of vipers, how shall you escape the judgments of hell! [*To the prostrate woman, her face still buried in her arms.*] Woman, your accusers are gone. They did not condemn you. Nor do I condemn you. Go, and sin no more.

THE WOMAN

[*Rises, weeping.*] O Master, Master!

JESUS

[*Startled.*] Magdalene!

THE WOMAN

Master, Master!

JESUS

Mary!

CURTAIN

ACT III

GETHSEMANE

PERSONS IN ACT III

JESUS	PHILIP,	Disciples of Jesus
YOUNG MARK	THADDEUS,	
HIS LITTLE SISTER	ANDREW,	
TERRENO, Captain of the Roman Guards	SIMON,	
BOOZ, Trader	JAMES THE YOUNGER,	
DATHAN, Money Changer	BARTHOLOMEW,	
	THOMAS,	
	MATTHEW,	
	JAMES,	
	JOHN,	
	PETER,	
	JUDAS,	

Roman and Jewish guards, traders, money changers, and others.

ACT III

Night of the same day. An olive grove in the country. At right stands a shed covering an oil press. At back in the distance arise the faint outlines of Jerusalem. The night is growing quiet. Now and then the moon floods the scene with light.

[*Young Mark and his little sister stand looking toward Jerusalem.*]

HIS LITTLE SISTER

He may not come to-night. He may sleep in the city to-night.

YOUNG MARK

I think he will come. He does not like the city in the night. I have heard some one say that he cannot pray in the city.

HIS LITTLE SISTER

I cannot see anybody. It is too dark to see anybody. Let us go back and say that we could not find him.

YOUNG MARK

We will wait, he will come.

HIS LITTLE SISTER

Do not go away from me, I am afraid.

YOUNG MARK

Listen! [*A pause.*] I thought I heard voices on the road.

HIS LITTLE SISTER

I am hearing voices all the time. I will be afraid when Jesus of Nazareth comes.

YOUNG MARK

Why will you be afraid?

HIS LITTLE SISTER

Father says that he can raise up persons who are dead. I am afraid he will bring some dead persons with him to raise them up. I do not want to see any dead persons raised up.

YOUNG MARK

Stop talking about dead persons.

HIS LITTLE SISTER

Father says that he knows the angels and talks with them on the mountains. I never have seen an angel.

YOUNG MARK

I nearly saw one once.

HIS LITTLE SISTER

Where?

[*Voices are heard.*]

YOUNG MARK

They are coming.

HIS LITTLE SISTER

O, I am afraid, let us run home!

YOUNG MARK

Why are you afraid? He loves children. He says grown persons must become children again if they want to go into the new kingdom. If you had heard him speak in the Temple as I have! . . . I would like to follow him all the time.

HIS LITTLE SISTER

I am afraid.

[*Various groups of persons enter from the right. It is too dark to distinguish anyone.*]

A VOICE

I will fetch water.

ANOTHER

I will go with you. [*They go off.*]

ANOTHER

I will sit and rest awhile. I am tired.

ANOTHER

We will sit and look upon the Temple.

YOUNG MARK

[*Approaching a group.*] Are you the disciples of Jesus?

PETER

Yes.

YOUNG MARK

My father invites Jesus and his disciples to sleep in our house to-night. Will you tell him what my father says?

[*Peter goes toward group at back.*]

HIS LITTLE SISTER

Come, let us go home. I am afraid. See, yonder! They are laying down dead people. They are talking to them. They are trying to get them to rise up. . . .

YOUNG MARK

Those are the disciples lying down and talking to each other. Be still.

HIS LITTLE SISTER

I am sure they are dead people. They are scolding them because they will not rise up.

[*Peter returns.*]

PETER

He says we shall stay here in the garden to-night.

YOUNG MARK

It will be cold toward morning.

PETER

If it turns cold we will pitch the tents your father gave us. Which of his sons are you?

YOUNG MARK

I am John.

[*He and his little sister hasten off.*]

JESUS

[*To the disciples.*] Are all here?

PETER

All but Judas.

JOHN

How wonderful is the night! It is more wonderful than the day, and each day is more wonderful than the day before. Yesterday and today our Father made us masters of the Temple. Surely he is very near. O, I am mad with love of Him!

PETER

You and your brother are usually mad about something. We again shall have to call you the sons of thunder.

JAMES

[*Angered.*] Do not call us that!

PETER

Jesus himself gave you the name.

JOHN

That was a long time ago. . . .

JESUS

Cease to contend.

[*The disciples return with jugs of water which are passed from one to another.*]

JAMES

Jesus, we will sit here by you, and look upon the night, and talk of the new kingdom. We are kings awaiting the goldsmiths that have graven crowns for us.

PETER

Come, Thaddeus, Simon, let us sit here.

[*They sit on the ground a little distance from Jesus. His face is turned toward Jerusalem.*]

THOMAS

I cannot understand why Judas left us before we had finished. He arose before we began to sing.

JOHN

Perhaps the spirit had come upon him, and he went into the night to pray alone under the stars. He yearns for the kingdom.

JAMES

I did not know that he had gone. I was lost in the dream of the Lord.

BARTHOLOMEW

He arose suddenly and went away without making any noise. It was while we were praying.

JAMES THE YOUNGER

He did not contend with us when we asked the Master to give us our places in the new kingdom.

SIMON

Did he not say to anyone why he was going away?

PETER

I saw him talking to-day with a Pharisee in the Temple.

PHILIP

O, let us not speak of Judas any more! Look at the stars. The moon is watching us. It is the eye of God. The heavens smile upon us. O Master, I would that now they might open and show us His face! Is it beautiful? Is it more beautiful than the face of a young wife in the dawn, or the face of a child sleeping on its mother's breast?

[*Jesus turns his head as if to answer.*]

PETER

Do not disturb him, he is tired.

JAMES

What will our old friends say when they see us sitting beside God in glory?

PHILIP

Perhaps they will hate us.

JAMES

Often in the night I have sat alone and wondered at the moon. Master, which of us will rule the moon, have power to say when it shall come forth in glory and when be hidden in darkness?

PETER

Do not disturb him, he is tired.

JOHN

Sometimes in the night when the angels think we cannot see, they push back the roof of the world. Sometimes I think I almost have seen the gold of the gates of Paradise. Perhaps the stars are the glitter of the gold of the gates of Paradise.

JAMES THE YOUNGER

I think the stars are as wonderful as the moon. They are so thick that they are like white sand on the shore of a sea.

ANDREW

They are like scales on the silver fish of the Sea of Galilee.

PHILIP

Perhaps they are silver foot-prints where the angels have walked.

JAMES

They are little white flowers strewn over the meadow of the night.

JAMES THE YOUNGER

In the new kingdom some of us will gather the stars in the dawn when the sun comes up, and in the night scatter them again over the sky, as a sower scatters seed over his fields when the Spring has come.

PETER

Do not talk so much about the stars. It is tiresome.

JOHN

I think our heavenly Father is trying to tell us something. I think he is making the stars to speak. But we do not understand the language of the stars.

THOMAS

What do you think He is trying to tell us?

JOHN

I think he is trying to tell us to prepare to see His face.

JAMES

Let us sing a hymn.

PETER

Do not sing. It is time for rest.

SIMON

I hope I shall not be asleep when the stars fall and the heavens open. O, I wish my father might have lived to see these days! Often as a child he told me of the wonder of the coming of the Lord.

ANDREW

These two days in the Temple I was afraid. Several times I thought of the soldiers of the Tetrarch that led away the Baptist. We never saw him again. Last night I dreamed of angry traders, and I heard many people shouting in my dream.

PETER

We do not need to have any fear. The angels are guarding us. They are fiercer than the legions of Rome and more beautiful than young virgins.

JAMES THE YOUNGER

Perhaps the stars are telling us of the love of God.

THOMAS

The love of God — I wonder, is it like a mother's love?

MATTHEW

I think it is more like a father's love. Which is it, Master?

JOHN

Perhaps it is like both.

JESUS

In all the world there is no love like unto the love of God.

JAMES THE YOUNGER

Master, is he also our Father?

PETER

Do not disturb him, he is tired.

JESUS

I have often told you.

JAMES

He will give us power to judge the world.

PHILIP

Perhaps that is what the stars are trying to tell us.

[*A star darts across the sky.*]

JOHN

[*Crying out.*] Look, look, . . . the heavens!

. . . The stars are falling! It is the sign of the beginning of the judgment!

[*Some of the disciples spring to their feet. There is confusion and fear.*]

BARTHOLOMEW

I am afraid. Let us go away from here.

ANDREW

How wonderful! It dashed straight down the valley. Master, shall we pray?

THADDEUS

I thought it would strike the ground a few leagues beyond the city. Let us sing a hymn.

JESUS

[*Sitting still.*] Peace. It is nothing.

[*There is a moment's pause. As they are about to sit down again, another star darts across the sky directly over them. Jesus arises.*]

JOHN

This is the sign!

PETER

It is a spear of gold with a head of flame.

JOHN

Master, Master, this is the sign!

BARTHOLOMEW

I am afraid. Let us go away from here.

THADDEUS

Let us go to the shed of the oil-press.

JESUS

Have no fear.

JOHN

I feel very strange. I feel that something is going to happen. Master, I will stand near you.

JESUS

Have no fear. It is the smile of our Father on the face of the night. Yet we must watch and pray, the hour may not be far off.

PHILIP

Look! Are not the heavens growing paler?

JOHN

Jesus, see, the heavens are growing paler, as if the dawn were breaking in the middle of the sky.

ANDREW

It is not the dawn. It is the night dust of the sky, like the white dust of the Dead Sea Desert when the wind is high.

JAMES

Master, is there not something moving among the stars? Perhaps our heavenly Father is walking across the dome of the night. Perhaps He is watching us from the dome of the night.

JESUS

He is always watching us.

[*Jesus sits down again; and one after another the disciples, cautious and still upward looking, also sit again. There is a brief pause.*]

SIMON

For a moment I thought we were about to look upon Him. O, I hope I shall not be sleeping when the hour comes!

JESUS

No man shall sleep in that hour.

SIMON

I would carry through all the ages the memory of even the first falling star.

JESUS

Not even the dead shall sleep in that hour.

THOMAS

The dead — shall they also see the face of God?

JESUS

They also.

JOHN

[*Sitting near Jesus.*] I hear a sound, as if some one were weeping there in the shadows — like the voice of a woman weeping in the shadows.

MATTHEW

I do not hear anything.

THOMAS

Perhaps it is a sleepless child crying somewhere.

JOHN

Jesus, I see some one passing before us, . . . there, . . . clothed in shining white. . . . See, out there! Now he is smiling and blessing us. [*Starts up, taking hold of Jesus.*] See, there he is! He is coming toward us!

JESUS

[*Arising.*] Peace.

JOHN

Now he turns, he is going away!

PHILIP

I too can see him, he is going down the valley!

JOHN

I do not know where he is going.

JAMES

I can see something, now I can see him! But he is not going down the valley. He is going toward the gate of the city. His face is shining like the sun at daybreak! Master, who is this?

JESUS

It is the spirit.

JOHN

The spirit! Will it come back? I cannot look on it again! I am weak, I am weary, my eyes are heavy.

JESUS

Lie down and sleep.

[*John almost sinks to the ground, Jesus sits beside him.*]

MATTHEW

[*To Andrew.*] Saw you anything?

ANDREW

I saw nothing; but I feel a strange warm breath near me, as if some one were breathing upon my face.

MATTHEW

I saw nothing, nor feel anything.

THOMAS

Nor I, I saw nothing.

MATTHEW

I see nothing shining but the stars and the moon and the glint of the moon on the Gate of Gold and on the roof of the Temple.

THOMAS

I could not see anything besides these. There

was no one in the valley clothed in shining white.

JESUS

It is not given to all to look upon the spirit.

ANDREW

Is the spirit more wonderful to look upon than the city yonder covered with moonlight?

THOMAS

How can anything be more wonderful than the city in the night?

PHILIP

The Gate of Gold in the moonlight trembles like a fire.

ANDREW

The Temple looks like the face of a dead person wrapped in a veil of silver.

PHILIP

Like a woman clad for a feast.

MATTHEW

More like a palace lighted for a feast.

THOMAS

When have you seen a palace lighted for a feast?

MATTHEW

I saw Pilate's at Cæsarea once lighted for a

feast. But I think there is no building in the world like the Temple. Herod's theatre and amphitheatre are as nothing compared to it.

ANDREW

Master, behold the wonder of the Temple in the moonlight! It is like a flame of gold whose smoke is silver. . . .

JESUS

[*Irritated.*] Not one stone of the Temple shall lie upon another in the day of judgment. They shall fall like the leaves of a tree when it frosts in the autumn. O vain Jerusalem! where men trim their beards, and hang upon themselves gold, and hang upon themselves silver and ivory; where women curl their hair and sprinkle it with dust of gold. In the hairs of their head they hang pearls like pale stars risen when the sun is setting. Upon their ears they hang earrings like drops of water that the moon shines on in the pool of Siloam. They cover their faces with veils like silver mist. They are like adulteresses that walk the streets of Cæsarea, or like young women slaves of Egypt. O vanity! What avail when the Lord cometh!

PETER

When will this be?

JAMES

[*To Peter.*] A little while ago you said we should not ask him questions.

JESUS

Do not contend among one another.

ANDREW

We have waited many months. Surely we will not have to wait much longer. Perhaps it will be to-night.

PETER

I thought a little while ago that the hour had come. But now the heavens are still again, as if we had not seen anything. Jesus, here among ourselves, tell us when this shall be. We will not speak of it to any man.

JESUS

I cannot tell you the day and the hour. Only our Father knows.

MATTHEW

We have given up everything. We are wanderers waiting for a kingdom. We are surrounded by enemies. The priests hate us. The scribes and Pharisees despise us. These two days in the Temple have sharpened the hate of our enemies. They tried to tempt some of us away from you. Perhaps they are now tempting Judas.

I am afraid something is going to happen. We are alone, away from the people, and it is night. [*He arises and after a time disappears among the trees.*]

ANDREW

What more signs shall we look for than the great stars that darted over our heads, and the spirit clothed in white, and the strange warm breath that came upon us? Jesus, what more signs will there be than these?

JESUS

You will know the hour. There will be pestilence and famine. In hate and confusion men will kill each other. The sun will be darkened with blood and the moon lose her light. In that night stars will dash down upon the earth. The wicked shall be burned like withered grass in a field. How can there be a world of love and peace if the wicked live? Therefore do we pray that the wicked repent before the hour of judgment, that they may enter the kingdom.

JAMES

Master, it is terrible to burn people!

PETER

[*To James.*] Not long ago you and your brother asked Jesus to permit you to burn the house of a Samaritan while he and his family were within asleep.

JAMES

That was different. We had asked him for shelter, and he beat us and drove us away.

JESUS

Do not contend. . . . In that day believe none other who calls himself the Son of Man, for I only shall be lifted up to our Father, while lightning cleaves the heavens in twain and shakes the earth. You shall then see the power and glory of our Father. The world has grown old and Israel has waited long.

BARTHOLOMEW

Shall we be afraid in that dreadful night?

JESUS

You will have no fear. The angels will gather up the righteous from the ends of the earth. And I shall give to each of you a kingdom, and you will eat and drink at the tables of my kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the tribes of Israel.

PHILIP

Master, you have told us this before. It is wonderful! But when? . . .

JESUS

I tell but what the prophets have told and what our Father has told me in the watches of the night.

It is written everywhere. Behold the heavens! Are they not speaking? Hear you no voice in the night when you pray? . . .

PETER

How soon will this be?

JESUS

I have told you I do not know the day and the hour.

PETER

Then the month or the year?

JESUS

This generation shall not pass till all these things have been.

JAMES

This generation!

THOMAS

Perhaps we shall have to wait for years.

ANDREW

O, I am impatient to look upon immortality without death!

JAMES

I am hungry to rule in a perfect world.

JESUS

Men and women eat and drink and marry as if the morning of the world had just dawned.

Heathen charms quiver low upon the breasts of virgins. Their girdles sparkle like the sun. They wash their bodies in fragrant ointments, that men shall desire them. They come forth with the odor of myrrh and saffron. They dwell in gardens of lilies. Nowhere have I seen such vanity — no, not even in Cæsarea and Tiberias. The world is at the evening hour. The night is falling. But they heed not. It was just so in the time of Noah before the flood. And the flood came and swallowed them.

THOMAS

Why should we be anxious if years may yet pass?

JESUS

I say to you watch, whether the time be at midnight, at cock-crowing, or in the morning, lest you fall into temptation and the hour come and you be numbered with the wicked. In that hour of terror the good and the evil shall be separated. Be not like a foolish master who watches not before but after thieves have entered and stolen. You have often heard me tell the people the story of the ten virgins and the story of the man dividing his goods among his servants and going into another country. Just so shall the wise and the foolish, and the righteous and the wicked, be separated.

PETER

Will men be separated from them they love?

JESUS

Two working in a field, one will be taken and one left. Two women grinding at a mill, one will be taken and one left.

PETER

And husband and wife — will they be separated if one be evil?

JESUS

They too.

JAMES

Master, it is terrible!

JESUS

How else shall the evil be burned out of the world? Look you, how selfish men have trodden down the poor. They shall likewise be trodden down. How else shall there be eternal life without grief, joy untouched with tears? They that live in hovels here, shall dwell in mansions. See now how calm the night. Our Father is looking down upon us from behind the stars and the veil of the sky. Yonder, a little way, unseen, is the throne of the world. Yonder is the dream of the world, the hope of the ages that now are dead. Think how many that are now sleeping in the earth have lifted their hands to our Father in

the still midnight hours. He will not forsake us. We are his children.

SIMON

Master, I am weary and long for sleep.

JAMES THE YOUNGER

I too, my eyes are heavy.

JESUS

Go to rest, all of you. The day has been long and troubled. I hear a voice calling me. I shall watch awhile.

[*The disciples, except Peter, James, and John, arise wearily and wander off at right and left.*]

SIMON

[*Calling back to Jesus.*] Master, do not let us sleep should there be signs the hour is coming.

JESUS

[*To Peter.*] Will you follow them?

PETER

I will not sleep yet.

JAMES

John and I also will watch awhile. I will wake him. He is still sleeping.

JESUS

Let him sleep. Stay here, I will go forward a little and pray.

[*Re-enter Matthew. Jesus tarries.*]

MATTHEW

Has Judas come?

PETER

No.

MATTHEW

I walked around the garden and a little upon the road. I thought I must find him. Jesus, I am troubled.

JESUS

What troubles you? The night is still.

MATTHEW

I heard evil mutterings in the Temple to-day. Two scribes followed me, and sought to entice me. When they saw I would have nothing to do with them, one coming close to me, said, "Your leader will be taken, leave him lest you also be taken." Later, close behind me, I heard some one say, "This young Galilean is a blasphemer. The High Priest will not let him pass." The priests, scribes, and Pharisees hate us. The traders and money changers despise us. Master, let us leave Jerusalem.

JESUS

We will not run away.

MATTHEW

At least let us leave the grove to-night and go upon the mountain.

JESUS

Matthew, lift up your eyes. Up there is our Father.

PETER

The people are on our side.

MATTHEW

We are alone in the night. The people are not here. They are sleeping, each in his house, or in his tent upon the wayside. Judas is gone. Is he listening to evil whispers? Judas is not wise. The priests are cunning. I am disturbed. I dare not go to sleep.

JAMES

Perhaps they have taken him, and he cannot come.

PETER

As I was passing from the Temple to-day, I heard a Pharisee say, "This man is a false prophet. His folly will cost blood." "Whose blood?" I turned and asked. He looked angrily at me, and passed out. He knew I was a follower.

JAMES

Perhaps the evil spirits are whispering into the ears of Judas. Perhaps he is wandering a little and cannot find his way back. But he will come.

He hungers for the kingdom. Master, do you not think he will come?

[*Jesus stands silent.*]

MATTHEW

I think he sits to-night in the house of tempters.

JAMES

It is a terrible thing to be tempted in the night.

JOHN

[*Awakening, and rising a little.*] I have slept. Master, see the stars. They are watching us. They are the golden eyes of God. We are in the palm of the hand of God. No harm can come to us. The soldiers of the earth cannot touch the palm of the hand of God. They cannot reach it. The hand of God is terrible in anger. No one will dare to strike against it.

JESUS

Matthew, He who makes the night to glow with moonlight, and commands the grass to come forth in the springtime — He will not forsake us. He has given his angels charge over us. We are his children. He has told us.

MATTHEW

Jesus, who are these angels that are to care for us?

JESUS

They are the good men and women of all times now living in a happy world. They are the saints. The prophets have said that it is so. What could all of Jerusalem do against the angels? Jerusalem is but a stone lying on the side of a valley. She is a withered weed. A few fallen stars would make her a city of flame, a small sea would drown her. Nothing can harm us — not a hair of our heads.

MATTHEW

But, Master, should the priests sometime send out the Temple guards, and they overtake us on a solitary highway; or should many of our enemies come upon us suddenly in a lonely place? . . . We are but a handful.

JESUS

Saw you anyone moving about near the garden? Are there here prowlers in the night with hearts poisoned against us?

MATTHEW

I did not see anyone. The trees cast deep shadows. The bushes are thick. I heard sounds; but I think they came from afar on the wind.

PETER

From which way came the sounds?

MATTHEW

Who can tell from whence a sound on the wind in the night?

JESUS

In other days I sent you forth without money and even without shoes, and you lacked nothing.

MATTHEW

We were then in villages and in the country, among friends and kin. But here . . . .

JESUS

But here we are among snakes and wolves.

MATTHEW

Here we are called doers of crime. The hearts of the wicked yearn for us. Their swords are crying out for us.

JESUS

To-morrow let each among you that has money buy a sword. How many swords have we?

MATTHEW

Two.

JESUS

Tarry here and watch. I will go forward a little and speak with our Father. Nothing shall harm us. He will not let anything harm us. For a moment, Matthew, you roused me and I forgot. Two swords are enough. We do not need any

more. . . . We do not need any swords. [*Turns and goes off at left and back.*]

MATTHEW

If we had a score of men armed . . . .

JAMES

You are tired, Matthew; go to sleep.

MATTHEW

Who will watch?

PETER

We will watch.

MATTHEW

I shall lie down. But I shall not sleep. I would it were morning. [*Goes off at right.*]

JAMES

Peter, saw you the face of Jesus in the moonlight as he turned toward us?

PETER

I was not looking.

JAMES

It was white like wool that has been washed. It was whiter than I have ever seen his face.

PETER

He has done great deeds in the Temple these two days. He is tired.

JAMES

He does not sleep every night. I often have wakened and heard him praying.

PETER

I have not heard him in the night. I sleep soundly.

JAMES

Likely he is thinking about Judas.

PETER

Likely.

JOHN

[*Approaching Peter and James.*] What was Matthew saying?

PETER

He is anxious.

JOHN

What is he anxious about?

PETER

He fears the priests and traders.

JAMES

I will lie down a little. I am very tired.

PETER

Lie down. I shall sit here.

[*A voice is heard rising and falling with emotion; but the words cannot be understood.*]

JOHN

[*Sitting beside Peter.*] He is praying. His voice is full of grief. He is troubled. I can tell he is troubled. I will go to him. [*Starts up.*]

PETER

[*Sternly.*] Do not disturb him. Let him pray. Did he not tell us to wait here while he prayed?

JOHN

You are angry.

PETER

I am tired. Let us lie down. [*Both lie on the ground near James.*]

JOHN

[*After a brief pause.*] I cannot understand what he is saying.

PETER

Nor I.

JOHN

Peter, are there not two voices?

PETER

I hear only one. I am tired. I am not listening.

JOHN

I think there are two voices. [*Starts up.*] Perhaps — perhaps an angel is talking to him.

One voice is like the sound of a harp in the Temple before the Levites sing.

PETER

Lie down! Do not talk any more. I hear only one voice.

[*John lies down. A brief pause.*]

JOHN

It is strange you cannot hear two voices. I also hear footsteps. Do you not hear footsteps, Peter? [*No answer.*] The leaves of the bushes are rustling. Some one is moving the leaves of the bushes, Peter.. I think some one is here whom we cannot see. The starlight and the moonlight are brighter than the sunlight. I can see things in the moonlight that I cannot see in the daylight. The moonlight is like silver liquid, like very thin silver liquid that the shields of the soldiers are bathed in. . . . Now the leaves of the bushes are still again. But I think some one is here whom we cannot see. Perhaps it is a spirit. Are you asleep, Peter?

[*No answer. The voice of Jesus, constantly growing fainter, is soon scarcely audible; and after a short time is silent. A soft wind flutters the leaves. The screech of a bird of the night is heard, and in the distance the baying of a dog. Some one comes from the right, stands a moment in the attitude of listening and returns from whence*

he came. There is a gradual hush of the night. In the garden there is no sound, save from the lips of John, who mumbles a little now and then in his sleep. Jesus reappears at back.]

JESUS

[*Calling softly.*] Peter. [*Coming forward a little.*] Peter.

[*John mumbles again in his sleep.*]

JESUS

[*Near the disciples.*] Peter, are you asleep? [*No answer.*] Asleep. Could you not watch with me an hour? The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. [*He moves back, looks a moment across the valley, then goes off again at left. Again for a time his words come forth indistinctly. Then silence. A brief pause.*]

A VOICE

[*Heard faintly.*] Jesus of Nazareth! . . . Jesus of Nazareth! . . . Jesus of Nazareth! . . .

JESUS FROM WITHOUT

Who is calling me?

THE VOICE

[*Nearer.*] Rabbi, Jesus of Nazareth, where art thou?

JESUS FROM WITHOUT

Who is calling me?

[*Presently Young Mark appears at back, and Jesus enters.*]

YOUNG MARK

[*Agitated. In a loud whisper.*] Rabbi, look toward the city! Look toward the wall near the Gate of Gold!

JESUS

[*Going toward him.*] Who are you?

YOUNG MARK

I am Young Mark. . . . They are collecting outside the gate. Dost thou see?

JESUS

I see nothing.

YOUNG MARK

There, to the left, near the Gate of Gold.

JESUS

I see lights.

YOUNG MARK

They are carrying torches. They are coming.

JESUS

It is nothing. Perhaps some rich man with many servants traveling by night. Why are you not asleep in your father's house? The hour is late.

YOUNG MARK

I have been hiding in the bushes. I heard what

Matthew said. I was afraid they would come with swords while you were all asleep. . . . See, Rabbi, they are crossing the valley!

[*Lights may be seen moving in the distance.*]

JESUS

Perhaps they are seeking some one who is lost. Perhaps they are seeking a lost child. It may be Caiaphas on his way to the top of the Mount of Olives. Has he not a palace there?

YOUNG MARK

He never has so many torchbearers. It is not the path to his palace. I see the glitter of swords. They are on the bridge over the brook. I can hear the clanking of swords. They are soldiers.

JESUS

They are soldiers. They are coming.

YOUNG MARK

Rabbi, come to my father's house. [*Jesus stands silent.*] My father will hide you. He loves you, come away. They are soldiers. . . . I once saw soldiers kill a man by the bridge. His blood ran into the brook. They cut him with swords till he fell. Rabbi, come to my father's house!

JESUS

I cannot hide like a thief.

YOUNG MARK

Rabbi, they are coming. They are nearer.

JESUS

Peace. Let them come.

YOUNG MARK

They are turning straight toward us. Come away, come away! [*Rushes off.*]

JESUS

[*Turning toward Peter, James, and John, still sleeping.*] How peacefully you sleep, tired children! Soon you will scatter like frightened sheep. [*Again looking out toward the approaching lights.*] O bearers of fire, bearers of hungry swords in the night, know you not that I do my Father's will! [*Goes off at left. A pause.*]

THE VOICE OF JESUS

[*Heard indistinctly at first, then clearly.*] O Father, do a mighty deed! The hour has come. If it be possible let this cup pass away from me! . . . [*Continues indistinctly.*]

[*Young Mark enters.*]

YOUNG MARK

Rabbi, they are near the Pomegranate grove.

THE VOICE OF JESUS

[*Rising again.*] Soften their hearts. But if

they will not, then let the earth beneath them rise in anger! . . . [*Continues indistinctly.*]

YOUNG MARK

Rabbi, the torches are in the Pomegranate grove. Come, come! . . .

THE VOICE OF JESUS

[*Rising again.*] O, I am sad unto death! . . .

YOUNG MARK

They are coming through the grove. They are putting out the torches. . . . Rabbi, come, come! . . .

THE VOICE OF JESUS

[*Very loud.*] O my Father, O my Father, let this bitter cup pass from me! . . .

PETER

[*Waking.*] Who is crying out?

YOUNG MARK

They are coming, yonder, the soldiers! They are coming for him. . . . O, bring him away!

[*Peter arouses James and John.*]

YOUNG MARK

[*To Jesus.*] Now they are upon us. The bushes are moving. O Rabbi, come! I will not stay any longer. I am afraid to stay any longer. Come, Rabbi! . . . [*Rushes off.*]

THE VOICE OF JESUS

[*In agony.*] Let this cup pass! Remember, O my Father, thy promise in the nights at Nazareth! Thou wilt not forsake me. Thou wilt keep thy word. Thou art God. Give me strength. Now thou art making me strong. Fire cometh into my mouth and a sword sticketh from mine eyes! . . .

JOHN

O, his voice! . . . Let us go to him.

[*Enter Judas.*]

JUDAS

[*Calling.*] Master, Master!

[*The three disciples rush upon Judas.*]

PETER

Judas, what is this you are doing? Who are these that stand behind the bushes?

JUDAS

Where is Jesus? He will send them away.

[*As Jesus enters from the left, Judas endeavors to kiss him. Jesus repulses Judas.*]

JUDAS

Master, they followed me. They have come to take thee!

PETER

Why did you not hide from them on the way?

JUDAS

[*Stepping nearer Jesus, confidentially.*] Destroy them, Master!

[*A score of soldiers and others carrying swords and clubs enter quickly from the right.*]

TERRENO

(Captain Roman Guards)

Which is the prophet?

JESUS

Are you a band of murderers wandering in the night?

TERRENO

Which is the prophet?

BOOZ

(Trader)

Captain, it is he. I know his voice!

JESUS

By what authority do you ask for him?

TERRENO

We are Roman soldiers of the Tower and Jewish guards of the High Priest. We have authority from the Council of the Sanhedrin.

JESUS

Why do you come with swords and clubs? Is there a robber here?

DATHAN
(Money Changer)

Captain, I am sure it is he.

TERRENO

We have come for the prophet of Nazareth, he that led the riot yesterday in the Temple. Let him stand forth. Which is he?

JESUS

I am he.

[*The soldiers quickly move around Jesus and the disciples.*]

TERRENO

Let none make any outcry, that needless blood be not drawn.

JUDAS

I sicken of this. [*Aside to Jesus.*] Now, Master, send them away by the power of our Father.

JESUS

I spoke every day in the Temple. Why do you come in the night as for a thief? Let shame rise up in you and send you away. What man of you has it within him to lay an angry hand on me?

TERRENO

We have no time for arguments. Come, you shall go back with us.

JESUS

[*Addressing individual soldiers.*] What evil have I done to you or to you? I have suffered for all of you. You are my brothers, you and you. . . .

TERRENO

Enough, be silent, come forth!

JESUS

Hear me, for you know not what you do. Behold the night how still it is; but in your hearts are tumult and unrest. From the stars a voice is calling; but you do not hear it. O, unstop your ears, you bearers of swords, for it is the voice of your Father that is calling you! . . .

TERRENO

[*To the guards.*] Do not listen to him. Advance!

BOOZ

[*Standing back of the guards.*] Captain, command the soldiers to seize him.

[*The soldiers begin to close in on Jesus.*]

JESUS

[*Moving toward them as they come, aroused.*] Are you not afraid lest God strike you all blind; or wither up each hand that holds a sword!

[*The Jews among the soldiers murmur and shrink back.*]

TERRENO

Stand still! He cannot harm you.

DATHAN

(Money Changer)

Strike him with a sword, one of you!

BOOZ

(Trader)

Give me a sword!

TERRENO

Stand back, you traders, and be silent!

JESUS

Disperse, else will the earth beneath your feet gap and you be cast into pits of fire!

[*The Jews shrink back again.*]

TERRENO

Stand still, you cowards, or I will have my soldiers rip him open! . . .

[*Several of the Roman soldiers draw their swords. The disciples move back in horror.*]

JUDAS

O, I sicken of this!

TERRENO

Sheathe your swords. I have given no order yet for his blood.

JESUS

Take away your soldiers! Have you no fear of me? Have you no fear of God? . . .

TERRENO

Silence! You talk too much!

[*The soldiers move more closely upon him.*]

JUDAS

Master, turn them into stone, or set them upon the gilded tower of the Temple, or let boiling water break from the earth and consume them! Wait no longer.

[*The Roman soldiers laugh.*]

JESUS

[*Lifting his hands and calling loudly.*] Now, O my Father, let thy. . . .

TERRENO

[*Drowning his voice.*] Silence, silence! Prepare to depart!

JUDAS

Master, destroy them!

[*The other disciples come running in from right and left. The soldiers move about quickly, drawing their swords.*]

TERRENO

Strike if any attack or move upon you in anger. Strike if any make an outcry. [*To disciples.*]

Let everyone be silent! Who cries out will be sabered!

JUDAS

O, I sicken of this!

MATTHEW

Master, call down the angels to defend us.

JESUS

[*After looking from one to another of his disciples, and again lifting his hands, in a loud voice.*] Father, O my Father, if it must be I will drink this bitter cup!

TERRENO

Silence!

[*The Roman soldiers with drawn swords rush upon Jesus.*]

TERRENO

Wait! Do not strike him till I command you.

JUDAS

Master, Master, go with them or they will kill thee. O, I sicken of this! In Jerusalem, before all the people, perhaps God will set thee free! . . .

JESUS

O my Father, thou art speaking to me! In Jerusalem thou wilt show thyself! Thou art God! Thy will be done. I go. . . .

TERRENO

Silence! Step forward from among the others and be bound.

[*One of the Jewish soldiers, Malthus, with cords approaches Jesus.*]

SEVERAL DISCIPLES

No! . . . No! . . . Do not bind him!

[*Peter draws his sword.*]

JESUS

Put up your sword, Peter. He that lifts a sword here will be killed.

PETER

You shall not bind him! [*Strikes quickly at Malthus who falls.*]

TERRENO

Seize him! Seize all of them!

[*Peter and the other disciples, except Judas, run off, pursued by some of the soldiers, traders, and others. Jesus helps to lift Malthus from the ground. The cords are taken by another soldier who begins to bind him.*]

JUDAS

Why do you bind him? He is not a murderer or a thief.

TERRENO

[*To soldiers.*] Bind him. Place him in the center. Light torches!

JESUS

[*While the soldier is binding him.*] Alas, Judas, my Judas, it is thou that hast done this — thou that hast prayed with me so often, and lain down to sleep with me in the night. I will pray our Father that ere thou die thou wilt be forgiven.

JUDAS

O Master, can it be thou art not he whom thou hast said? Can it be thy words have failed to reach the ear of God, and thou art helpless? Jesus, Master, speak!

JESUS

Thou knowest who I am.

[*Torches are lighted, Jesus is placed in the center, and all but Judas march off, followed presently by the soldiers and others that pursued the disciples.*]

JUDAS

[*Falling to his knees.*] O Father, what have I done! If he is indeed thy heaven-appointed king of Israel, to-morrow by a great miracle thou wilt set him free! O, before all the people thou wilt set him free! But if he is not he of whom the prophets have spoken, let none do him any

harm. Let the people send him forth from the city, that we be no longer deceived. O, I am weary of heavens that come not, of promises unfulfilled! Father, to-morrow thou wilt show thyself, or by thy absence chastise a gentle fool! . . .

CURTAIN

ACT IV

THE TRIAL BEFORE PILATE

PERSONS IN ACT IV

JESUS	ZARA, a Jerusalemite	
PILATE, Governor of Judea	NATHAN, a Galilean	
CAIAPHAS, High Priest	KORA,	Money Changers
ANNAS, Former High Priest	DATHAN,	Money Changers
JUDAS, a Disciple of Jesus	SARAS,	Scribes
TERRENO, Captain of the Roman Guards	SIMEON,	Scribes
JOSEPH, an Arimathean	LEVI,	Priests
JACHIN, an Overseer of the Temple	DARPHAS,	Priests
DAVID, a Damascene	JOSIAS,	Priests
	BOOZ,	Traders
	BENJAMIN,	Traders
	JACOB,	Traders

A Roman guard, a palace servant, soldiers and many others.

ACT IV

The following morning. In front of the palace of Herod the Great. At left a balcony, connected with the palace by bronze doors at back, and with the pavement below by broad steps. Extending to the right are rows of massive white marble pillars, through which may be seen a large court, with flowing fountains, reservoirs, beds of many colored flowers, broad walks, and stone seats. Protruding here and there are magnificently sculptured porticos with columns of varied colors. In a near fountain, doves and other birds are bathing and pluming their feathers, with a profusion of cries and flapping of wings. Over the scene shines the early morning sun.

[*A Roman guard and a palace servant are talking at left.*]

ROMAN GUARD

When is the Governor going back to Cæsarea?

PALACE SERVANT

Imediately after the Feast. He hates Jerusalem.

ROMAN GUARD

I like it. This is the first time I have been here. I will ask the captain if I may come again next year. . . . I watch here at the gates part of the night, then I find amusement.

PALACE SERVANT

Amusement!

ROMAN GUARD

There is plenty of it here.

PALACE SERVANT

They say the Jews would kill a woman. . . .

ROMAN GUARD

That is silly talk. The Jews are fond of women.

PALACE SERVANT

The Governor thinks the Jews in Jerusalem queerer even than those of Cæsarea. Here they are always disputing about religion.

ROMAN GUARD

To hear them talk you would think religion is a thing you can eat.

PALACE SERVANT

In Cæsarea people work. Here nearly everybody makes his living out of religion. In Rome we make less fuss about all of our gods than they do about their one god.

ROMAN GUARD

Have they only one god? He must be very busy. How can one god look after everything? What kind of a god is he?

PALACE SERVANT

He lives in the clouds.

ROMAN GUARD

Has anybody ever seen him?

PALACE SERVANT

Some say that he has been down several times, and has been seen by their prophets.

ROMAN GUARD

I do not believe it. How can anyone live in the clouds?

PALACE SERVANT

Some of our gods have lived in the clouds.

ROMAN GUARD

That is different. Our gods can do anything.

PALACE SERVANT

This god is very strict with the Jews. He has made thousands of rules which they must obey.

ROMAN GUARD

Is that true!

PALACE SERVANT.

For example, he does not permit them to eat the meat of swine.

ROMAN GUARD

Perhaps he is only jesting. Perhaps he does not really mean it.

PALACE SERVANT.

He is a serious god. He is not the kind of a god that jests. They say he has never laughed. They say he has never even smiled.

ROMAN GUARD

Great Cæsar, is that true! Why do the people cling to him? Why do they not get one of our gods? They are not strict with us.

PALACE SERVANT.

They are afraid.

ROMAN GUARD

Who were this Jew god's father and mother?

PALACE SERVANT.

O, he isn't like our gods! He never had any father and mother.

ROMAN GUARD

Isn't it silly?

PALACE SERVANT

They say, though, that he will have a son some day.

ROMAN GUARD

A son?

PALACE SERVANT

This son is to be the boy that will defeat Cæsar in battle.

ROMAN GUARD

Ridiculous! . . . You know a lot about their religion.

PALACE SERVANT

I know almost enough to be a scribe, but I should rather be a priest.

ROMAN GUARD

Do the priests make much money?

PALACE SERVANT

Many of them marry rich women. They live in the finest houses in Jerusalem. Inside some of them there are decorations of carved sandal wood from India and cedar from Lebanon. The gratings of their windows are brazen bars that look like dead gold. . . .

ROMAN GUARD

[*Interrupting.*] See, a lot of people are coming up the hill. . . . No doubt they are strangers

attending the Feast, come to pay their respects to the Governor.

PALACE SERVANT

It is too early for that. He is eating breakfast. These Jews are a tactless people.

ROMAN GUARD

What magnificent robes some of them wear!

PALACE SERVANT

They are probably priests who do not live in Jerusalem. There are some of our soldiers among them, . . . and the captain of the Tower. Those walking ahead are servants of the High Priest. I can tell by their garments.

ROMAN GUARD

There is walking in the midst of them one whose hands are bound — is there not?

PALACE SERVANT

It is dreadful to see a criminal. Perhaps he has done something horrible.

ROMAN GUARD

How pale his face!

PALACE SERVANT

His face is white with dust. O, his eyes! . . . Look at his eyes. They are like the eyes of slaves that have been bored out by an angry master.

ROMAN GUARD

He has closed his eyes. He walks as if he were very tired.

[*Enter Levi and others.*]

LEVI
(Priest)

Pay our respects and bid Pilate give us an audience at once.

PALACE SERVANT

I think he is eating his breakfast. [*Goes off.*]

[*Enter Caiaphas, Annas, and other priests; also scribes, members of the Council, elders, Pharisees, traders and money changers of the Temple, a few Temple guards, Roman soldiers and their captain guarding Jesus, and many others. As the action grows other persons enter, so that toward the end a great crowd is present.*]

LEVI

A servant has gone to announce us.

CAIAPHAS
(High Priest)

Everyone be silent when the Governor appears, that he can hear what we are saying.

ANNAS
(Former High Priest)

We will demand his death.

[*Cries of approval from the crowd.*]

DARPHAS
(Priest)

It is not wise with a smile to turn loose a dangerous fool. It is not wise to turn loose the Son of God. [*Laughter.*]

JOSIAS
(Priest)

Do not crowd together so. Spread out.

[*There is a movement of the crowd along the balcony and along the pillars in front of the Court. Re-enter palace servant.*]

PALACE SERVANT

The Governor is eating breakfast. He will hear you in the Judgment Hall when he has finished eating.

CAIAPHAS
(High Priest)

We cannot enter the Judgment Hall to-day. Our Feast begins to-night. We should be unclean if we entered a gentile house to-day. Even a Roman servant should know that. Bid Pilate come upon the balcony.

[*The palace servant goes off.*]

ANNAS
(Former High Priest)

[*To the people.*] There must not be any delay. We do not want any disturbance during the Feast. The rabble must not rise up again. Here

is their leader. He has defamed Moses. He has claimed to be Messias. He is a worker of magic and says it is from God. He is a corrupter of religion. He is an enemy of Israel and Rome. These things have earned his death.

CAIAPHAS

Are all the people agreed?

MANY VOICES

We are! . . . We are! . . . Down with the blasphemer, . . . false prophet, . . . defamer of religion, . . . defamer of Moses and the prophets! . . .

ANNAS

(Former High Priest)

O that in my old age such poisoned weeds should grow beneath my feet! Look at him, you sons of Abraham. Are we to blot out Moses for this upstart god?

THE PEOPLE

No! . . . No! . . . Never! . . .

ANNAS

(Former High Priest)

His hair is matted like a swineherd's and his face half stone, half flesh. Is this the thing two days ago some fools called Israel's king! Yet fools have lighted fires it took a thousand years to quench.

VOICES

We will quench his fire! . . . Pilate will make short work of him! . . .

ANNAS

(Former High Priest)

He cleanses men, yet is himself as stench that rises from Gehenna. He forgives sin in his own name, as if he were the Lord — this Nazarene Messias! [*Turning to Levi.*] He was a carpenter by trade — was he not?

LEVI

(Priest)

Yes, a carpenter.

[*In the midst of the Roman soldiers, in front of the balcony, stands Jesus. His face is very pale and his head cast down. Now and then he twists his hands, as if the cords were hurting his wrists, and his lips move, as if he were muttering. The bronze doors at the back of the balcony swing open, and Pilate, courtiers, and guards enter. Two of the guards descend and stand on the pavement. Two others stand at the head of the stairs. The crowd below is silent and bows as Pilate steps forward.*]

PILATE

You have summoned me upon the balcony. What is it?

CAIAPHAS
(High Priest)

Worthy Governor, we bring greetings and blessings. It is not our choice to be here at this early hour. But the cause is urgent. He that stands here bound has corrupted the people and must suffer.

PILATE

Take him and judge him according to your laws. Why do you bring him to me?

CAIAPHAS
(High Priest)

We have judged him, the Council has judged him, and he stands confessed and borne down with guilt.

PILATE

Did not Pompey, and Cæsar after him, assure you the right to the execution of your own laws? Why do you bring this person before me? Take him and judge him. [*Turns to go.*]

CAIAPHAS
(High Priest)

Worthy Governor, tarry. We desire thy approval of the sentence passed upon him. It has been judged that he shall die. But Cæsar denies us the right without thy approval to put a man to death.

PILATE

O, you want me to kill him!

CAIAPHAS

(High Priest)

We desire thy sanction to the sentence of the Council.

PILATE

What has he done? Let him stand forth. Let me see him.

[*The soldiers push Jesus forward on the pavement directly below the balcony.*]

PILATE

He does not look dangerous. His face is very pale. Unbind his hands. An accused person need not be bound during trial. There are enough soldiers to guard him.

[*Some of the soldiers take the cords from Jesus' wrists.*]

LEVI

(Priest)

Worthy Governor, if he had not been a great criminal we should not have brought him here.

ANNAS

(Former High Priest)

Time presses. We ask thy sanction to his crucifixion.

PILATE

Why this haste?

ANNAS

(Former High Priest)

On Feast days we may not punish anyone. The Passover begins to-night. It would be dangerous to keep him alive in Jerusalem until the Feast is ended. He has followers, enemies of Rome and Israel, haters of law and religion. Men like him light fires of revolt. We ask thee to order him led to the cross.

PILATE

I will not kill a man without hearing the evidence.

[*Murmurs of dissatisfaction. The crowd is constantly growing.*]

SEVERAL VOICES

[*Shouting.*] He has been tried! . . . The Council has tried him! . . . It has judged he should die! . . . We want only thy approval! thy approval, Pilate! . . .

PILATE

Stop shouting! else I will deny your petition at once and retire within. My ears are more yielding to quiet sounds.

CAIAPHAS
(High Priest)

[*To the crowd.*] Silence! Silence! [*To Pilate.*] Bear with the people. They have suffered much by the deeds of the prisoner before you. His name is Jesus. He was a carpenter at Nazareth. Conceiving himself appointed by God, he has gone through the land preaching ridiculous doctrines. By tricks he has led the people to believe that he has power over the winds and the rain — even over death. For example, he has been heard to say that he can destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days. He pretends by a word to cure the sick and to forgive sin and to drive out devils. He himself hath a devil which he conceives to be a god. . . .

PILATE

Has he murdered anyone?

CAIAPHAS

We have not heard that he has murdered anyone.

PILATE

Perhaps he is only a kindly madman. But for madness we cannot take away his life. . . .

ANNAS

[*Interrupting.*] Kindly! He is a disturber of the peace. He is a corrupter of the people.

Two days ago he caused an uproar in the Temple.

PILATE

You have overseers in the Temple who command enough guards to suppress any slight disturbance — have you not?

ANNAS

Slight disturbance! It was a riot! Here is one of the overseers. Let him tell what occurred.

JACHIN

(Overseer)

[*In a loud angry voice.*] He and his band of murderers drove out the traders and changers, and beat them, and . . .

PILATE

[*Annoyed.*] Silence! I will not have my ears split by such ridiculous cries. [*To Annas.*] There are soldiers in the Tower of Antonia to quell any rioting in the Temple.

ANNAS

Here is a captain of thy guards. He can tell what happened. He was there. Wilt thou hear him?

PILATE

Let him say if there was any disturbance in the Temple.

TERRENO

[*Stepping forward.*] It is true, Worthy Governor, that two days ago there was some rioting there, led by the Nazarene.

PILATE

[*Sternly.*] He shall be punished for it. . . .
[*Shouts of approval.*]

PILATE

But not with death.
[*The shouts turn to murmurs of dissatisfaction.*]

CAIAPHAS

Bear with me a little longer, Worthy Governor, . . .

PILATE

Everybody be quiet! I am trying to hear your High Priest.

CAIAPHAS

We have a Law and by that Law he should die. For many generations our fathers have handed down to us the pious Laws delivered by God himself to Moses on Mount Sinai.

ALL THE PEOPLE

Blessed be his name! . . . Blessed be the name of the Lord!

CAIAPHAS

These holy Laws are the bread of our lives. Thou, Worthy Pilate, knoweth that. They have sustained our forefathers. They have sustained us from youth up. They are our religion. They are the words of God.

ALL THE PEOPLE

Blessed be his name!

CAIAPHAS

Now comes this ignorant carpenter of Nazareth, named Jesus. He is one born with the habit of much talking. He has told the people everywhere that our God-given laws are as nothing. He bids men and women do what he does, and forbear what he does not. He neither fasts nor obeys the holy laws of purifications. . . .

PILATE

He looks like a man who fasts overmuch.

ANNAS

No, he does not fast. We can prove he does not fast.

PILATE

I do not care to hear the proof.

CAIAPHAS

He does not observe the Sabbath. . . .

ANNAS

Think of it, he does not observe the Sabbath! He does all manner of things upon the Sabbath. He says it is permitted of men to do anything they like upon the Sabbath.

CAIAPHAS

He does not offer sacrifice or practice Temple service. . . .

ANNAS

Dost thou hear, Governor? He does not offer sacrifice. How else can we obtain the mercies of God — wilt thou tell us that?

PILATE

I do not know the connection between burning meat and prosperity. I am no authority on your religion. Does your god like the smell of burning meat? Never mind, we will not discuss the point. [*To Caiaphas.*] Go on.

CAIAPHAS

He goes about with sinful men and with harlots. On his own authority he forgives sin. . . .

ANNAS

Only God can forgive sin.

CAIAPHAS

O Worthy Governor, if thou wert one thousandth part a Jew, thou wouldst burn with anger

against this fool. By our Law he should die. We ask thee, representative of our King Tiberius, that thou order him led to the cross. . . .

THE CROWD

To the cross with him! . . . To the cross with him! . . . The Governor will deliver him! . . . Pilate will deliver him! . . .

[*The noise subsides. Pilate stands silent. All eyes are upon him.*]

ANNAS

[*After a pause, contemptuously.*] Why should this Nazarene workman, found guilty, be given a moment's thought by the Governor of Judea?

PILATE

[*Aroused.*] I will tell you why! When upon a recent occasion I ordered slain some rebels and conspirators who had outraged the laws of Cæsar, there came such a cry of hate and malice from your very Council as filled my ears for days. It has been whispered that even now petitions against me are on their way to Cæsar. Since you did not think my reasons sufficient for slaying these rebels and conspirators, I am determined now not to slay anyone by the request of your Council for poorer reasons!

ANNAS

If he lives then dies peace in Jerusalem!

PILATE

[*Sharply.*] I am able to take care of the peace of Jerusalem. [*Looking down upon Jesus.*] Moreover, look at your prisoner. I never saw a man more helpless. You yourselves have not said that he was ever armed with anything more deadly than words. Yet you would think he had no tongue in his head. He has not uttered a sound in his own defense. He has the pallor of one walking with death. Is he the sole cause of your summons of me?

CAIAPHAS

He is.

PILATE

I have decided. [*Turns to go.*]

LEVI

(Priest)

Governor! . . .

DARPHAS

(Priest)

Worthy Governor! . . .

SARAS

(Scribe)

Governor! . . .

PILATE

[*Turning.*] I can listen to but one at a time.

SARAS
(Scribe)

There are other charges, graver than any yet mentioned. Wilt thou hear them?

PILATE

Go on.

SARAS
(Scribe)

This lover of harlots has gone up and down the country, in cities and towns, commanding all men to leave their fathers and mothers, wives and children, and all else, and follow him. How could there be any love of country if the people forsook all and ran after one man? Would not the authority of both Israel and Rome cease? Is not such a person an enemy of Israel and of Rome, and therefore worthy of death?

PILATE

How many followers has he?

SARAS

We do not know.

PILATE

He could not destroy patriotism until many persons followed him.

SARAS

Such glittering doctrines of revolt against

earthly authority and false promises of heavenly gold will spread rapidly among the people.

PILATE

But a man cannot be condemned for that which lies in the future. He can be judged for that only which lies in the past.

SARAS

Hear me yet a little. I have said that he has proclaimed his authority above the authority of Israel and Rome. That lies in the past. And this also lies in the past. Two days ago he entered Jerusalem at the head of a ragged procession, and was hailed by some of his followers, "Messias," "Son of David," "King."

PILATE

Often a man's followers cry out against his will, giving him titles which he does not claim for himself. Some years ago at Rome when Germanicus had his triumph, several foolish persons cried out and called him Cæsar. He had them quickly silenced.

SARAS

This Galilean was commanded to silence his followers; but he would not, and said, "If they did not cry out, the very stones would cry out!"

LEVI

Before us all in the Council. . . .

DARPHAS

He called himself a king. . . .

SARAS

In the Temple also. . . .

MANY PERSONS

We all, . . . we all have heard him call himself a king! . . .

PILATE

I will not listen to several at a time.

CAIAPHAS

[*To the crowd.*] Let Saras speak.

SARAS

Worthy Governor, be not misled by his silence. He is humble now. But only yesterday, before all the people in the Temple, he told a parable of wicked vinedressers and the master of the vineyard. He proclaimed himself the beloved son of the master of the vineyard of Israel. The wicked vinedressers had slain one after another of them sent by the master, and then he sent his beloved son. . . .

PILATE

[*Interrupting.*] I do not care to hear any parables.

SARAS

This ignorant Galilean has declared himself Messias, the judge and king of Israel.

PILATE

Has he claimed to be each of these?

SARAS

Messias will be our judge and king. He has said openly that he will judge Israel and deliver us from the kings of the world, which means, of course, deliver us from Cæsar.

PILATE

[*Stepping forward again and looking down at Jesus.*] Have you told it about that you are a king or a judge of the Jews?

[*There is talking and pushing about in the crowd in an endeavor to get near the balcony.*]

PILATE

[*To the people.*] Be silent! I cannot hear him. [*To Jesus.*] Will you answer me?

JESUS

I have said it.

VOICES IN THE CROWD

[*Heard above the outburst of noise.*] He has said it! . . . He does not deny it! . . . What more is wanted? . . . To the cross! . . . Governor, to the cross with him! . . .

PILATE

[*Angered.*] Silence! Silence! [*To Jesus.*] Have you anything else to say? [*A pause.*] Fear has taken away his voice. I will speak with him alone. [*To the soldiers surrounding Jesus.*] Two of you lead him up into the Judgment Hall. Perhaps there his voice will come back to him.

[*While Jesus is being led up the stairs to the balcony, and retires with Pilate and two soldiers through the bronze doors into the palace; Caiaphas, the priests, members of the Council, and the scribes, are in animated conversation.*]

CAIAPHAS

[*In a loud voice.*] Hear me, all of you who love the Lord! Shall we accept this runner after unclean women as Messias?

MANY VOICES

No! . . . no! . . . never! . . . never! . . .

CAIAPHAS

Do we still hold to Moses?

MANY VOICES

Forever! . . . forever! . . .

CAIAPHAS

Shall he die who seeks to destroy our religion?

MANY VOICES

He shall die! . . . He shall die! . . .

CAIAPHAS

Though you are commanded to be silent, after a little pause you shall cry out again and yet again for his death.

BOOZ

Will the Roman soldiers compel us to be silent? [*Caiaphas looks at Terreno.*]

TERRENO

Is he whom you seek to crucify a Roman?

SEVERAL VOICES

He is of no nation! . . . He is a son of Beelzebub! . . . Withered be the breast that gave him drink! . . .

CAIAPHAS

[*To the crowd.*] You are answered. In the days of our forefathers, he who in the morning sought to corrupt our religion, beheld not again the midday sun. [*Reproachfully.*] Some of you stand here like sheep and oxen, dumb and unmoved! Have you no fire within you . . . [*indicating*] you and you standing there?

BOOZ

Worthy High Priest, some of us are going upon the streets to gather in the people, that our demands may be spoken in a louder voice.

CAIAPHAS

Should you meet any of his followers, reason with them, that their eyes may be opened. Tell the people that a corrupter is in our midst, one who would pierce the eyes of our children, that they wander forever in darkness, one who has outraged the Holy Law, a Messias of rags, a companion of sinful men, a lover of harlots!

BOOZ

[*Going out.*] We will bring Jerusalem to the foot of the balcony!

[*Traders, money changers, and many other persons follow Booz.*]

CAIAPHAS

[*Calling to them.*] Lead thither the whole people. Let none turn aside. Pilate must hear the angered voice of Jerusalem!

[*During the foregoing, the voice of one pushing through the crowd in the direction of the priests is heard calling, "Father Meier! Father Meier!"*]

ANNAS

Who is calling Father Meier?

JUDAS

[*Surrounded by David the Damascene, Zara the Jerusalemite, Nathan the Galilean, and*

others.] It is I, Judas of Kerioth! Where is Father Meier?

LEVI

I have not seen him.

DARPHAS

He is not here.

CAIAPHAS

It was you that led the guards upon the hiding place of the Nazarene — was it not?

JUDAS

It was I. Where is he? Where is Jesus? I do not see him.

CAIAPHAS

He is in the Judgment Hall with Pilate.

JUDAS

You are asking Pilate to kill him! Is it true you are asking Pilate to kill him?

SIMEON

[*Pushing Judas back.*] Is this the way to address the High Priest?

CAIAPHAS

Do him no harm.

[*Simeon releases Judas.*]

DAVID

(Damascene)

[*To Caiaphas.*] May I speak a little?

CAIAPHAS

Be brief.

[*Caiaphas and several of the priests engage in conversation while David is speaking.*]

DAVID

[*To the crowd.*] None should do our Worthy High Priest injustice, or any of the priests and members of the Council. We look to them for wisdom and light. You are here asking Pilate to crucify Jesus, the Galilean teacher. Is it not true?

MANY VOICES

It is true! . . . He shall die! . . . The Governor will crucify him!

DAVID

Two days ago this Galilean drove the traders and changers from the Temple.

A VOICE

He shall suffer for it!

DAVID

On that day many of you applauded the act. I ask you, was it a good or an evil act?

ZARA

(Jerusalemite)

The traders and changers abused the people.

NATHAN
(Galilean)

They extorted money from the people.

DAVID

I see standing here some who gave the Galilean aid.

A VOICE

The traders desecrated the house of God!

DAVID

I honor our priests and councilors, and I love the Law, and I too gave him aid. Was it a good or an evil act to drive out the traders and changers from the house of God?

A VOICE

It was a good act!

DAVID

Has it changed in these two days?

CAIAPHAS

[*Awakening to what is happening, angered.*] Be silent! Who are you that comes as a friend and are a traitor?

[*Several persons surround David, as if to seize him, and others come forward in his defense.*]

JOSEPH
(Arimathean)

Worthy High Priest, let there be no violence! Pilate will not tolerate violence here!

CAIAPHAS

Stand apart! We will have no blows struck!

JOSEPH

(Arimathean)

This man's name is David. He is of Damascus. He is a pious man.

SEVERAL VOICES

[*Amid jeers and hisses.*] Let him speak! . . . Let him speak! . . .

DAVID

[*To the people.*] I honor the priests. I honor the councilors. But is it right to crucify him because he made clean the house of God?

[*Some in the crowd cry out for the death of Jesus, and some that he shall not die.*]

CAIAPHAS

Silence, everyone! It is true he drove out the traders and changers. We do not ask his death for that. The Council itself ere long again would have placed the traders and changers upon the street, as in the time of our fathers. We ask his death because he has announced himself to be Messias. Do you of Damascus, and some of you standing here that applauded his words, believe him to be Messias?

DAVID

I know he is a great teacher. I know he

preaches repentance and love toward one another. Perhaps some of his followers have said foolish things of him.

CAIAPHAS

Answer me! Is he or is he not the Son of God?

DAVID

He is not. Does he say he is?

CAIAPHAS

A moment since, here before all the people, he said it.

DAVID

It is pitiful that he has said it.

JUDAS

O worthy priests, and friends and enemies of Jesus, he may yet show us that he is the Son of God! [*Laughter and hisses.*] I have seen him still the sea when the storm beat upon it. I have seen the lame walk when he touched them. I have seen a man brought to life after he had been dead four days. [*More laughter.*]

ANNAS

You are mad with love of him.

JUDAS

O priests, he may yet free himself! There is

yet time. God is watching. I am sure God is watching!

CAIAPHAS

It is ridiculous. He cannot free himself.

JUDAS

But should he fail, you will not ask his death? I have seen him nurse the sick, and hunger that the poor might have to eat.

CAIAPHAS

He has claimed the place of Moses. He must die.

[*The crowd shouts approval.*]

JOSEPH
(Arimathean)

Worthy High Priest, hear me a moment, and all you people hear me a moment. I am a Jew. I am a member of the Council. Moses is my lawgiver, and the religion of our fathers is my religion. But am I perfect because I am a Jew and endeavor to obey the Law? On that day our mothers bear us are we the children of error. Who standing here is perfect? . . .

ANNAS

[*Interrupting.*] Why are you multiplying words? What have we to do with you?

JOSEPH

Bear with me a little longer. Has this Galilean said that he is the Son of Man spoken of by the prophet Daniel?

ANNAS

He has said it. All heard him.

JOSEPH

He has greatly erred. But have we not taught our children for generations that God will one day send us his son? How simple it is for a young man, in the years of his dreams, wandering over the hills in the twilight, brooding on the shortcomings of life, to feel within himself that the Lord has sent him to sweeten the ways of the bitter world!

LEVI

He has declared himself to be Messias.

JOSEPH

He is not the first, nor will he be the last, to fancy himself touched with fire from the clouds, and called by heavenly voices in the night. And can you say, or can I say, that God has not whispered to him some things?

LEVI

Can any man improve the works of God! He has sought to change our religion.

JOSEPH

He will not be the last.

LEVI

No man shall change our religion. Death shall be his reward.

JOSEPH

It would be better to let him live; for I have heard that he has also said, "Come to me you who are heavy laden and I will give you rest," and in the shadow of his love the poor have rested.

CAIAPHAS

Why should the poor rest in him? Who is he? . . .

JOSEPH

He alone hath bidden them come.

CAIAPHAS

Are you, too, persuaded to follow this Messias of rags — you a member of the Council?

JOSEPH

I do not follow him. But Israel has need of dreamers of other worlds and seers of sweeter days. Let us gently correct his error, and spare him for the love that is his. Why — I myself in youth once fancied that perhaps I. . . .

[*Caiaphas, interrupting, begins a violent*

speech, but his voice is drowned by the shouts of many persons rushing in, led by Booz, Dathan and other traders and money changers. They call repeatedly for the death of Jesus.]

CAIAPHAS

[*To Joseph.*] Hear the voice of the people! The people are wise.

[*During the noise and confusion, Pilate and Jesus enter unobserved upon the balcony. Pilate speaks, but is not heard.*]

CAIAPHAS

The Governor is on the balcony! Everyone be silent!

PILATE

How can justice be done when you all are crying out like men at the games!

[*While waiting for the noise to subside, he sends Jesus down the balcony stairs. As Jesus reaches the pavement, the priests move to one side, and he stands alone in the center of the mob.*]

JUDAS

[*At Jesus' back.*] O Master, do it now!

JESUS

[*Turning.*] Judas, is it thou?

JUDAS

It is I, Master. Wait no longer! If thou art

dreaming wake up! Send down the angels with sharp swords! [*Persons standing near Judas laugh at him.*] If thou canst not, O tell the people before it is too late! Perhaps they will let thee go back to Galilee.

JESUS

[*Lifting up his hands, in agony.*] O Father! Father! . . .

[*The crowd jeers, drowning his voice.*]

BOOZ

He is calling upon his father.

KORA

His father was a carpenter.

A VOICE

Everybody be silent, so that we can hear what he is saying.

DATHAN

Perhaps he wants his father to build him a ladder.

JACOB

He should call for a stonecutter to hew him out a tomb.

MANY PERSONS

Away with him! . . . Away with him, blasphemer!

PILATE

[*Angered.*] High Priest, command your people to be orderly, else will I call the guards from the Tower. One would think that insurrection is breeding here.

A VOICE

Perhaps it is!

CAIAPHAS

Be silent! Everybody be silent! Worthy Governor, do not take seriously the utterance of this madman. We make no insurrection. We are a peaceful people.

PILATE

I do not find any fault worthy of death in this Nazarene.

[*The priests and scribes mutter excitedly among themselves, while the people stand silent in amazement.*]

ANNAS

[*Wrathfully.*] If a man proclaims himself king is he not an enemy of Rome?

PILATE

Any idler looking overmuch at the stars may think himself a king. In fact there are philosophers at Rome who say that every man is a king.

ANNAS

He has proclaimed himself a king.

PILATE

But he says that his kingdom is not of this world. I do not know where it is. I think he does not know himself. Likely he is a king, a king of fools, whose words you have taken too seriously.

SARAS

He is one who has the gift of words. His words are swords. His soft words are poisonous like the tongue of the adder. They are more dangerous than his hard words.

CAIAPHAS

Moreover, he says he is the king of Israel. Ask him, Worthy Governor, if he does not say he is the king of Israel.

PILATE

[*Looking down at Jesus.*] Are you the king of Israel?

JUDAS

[*In a loud whisper to Jesus.*] Now, O Master, now! Answer him by a great deed! It would be wonderful to rise up a moment in mid-air! Or clap thy hands together thrice, and let a river of rain wash down upon us! Then in a loud voice bid the rain cease, and let it be so! . . .

[*The people laugh.*]

PILATE

[*To Judas.*] Stop talking. [*To Jesus.*] Answer me. Do you say you are the king of Israel?

JESUS

I am he whom I have said. . . .

[*The people, jeering, drown his voice and crowd in upon him.*]

PILATE

Captain, push back the people! Silence! Silence! I want to hear what he is saying.

TERRENO

Back, back, I say, all of you!

CAIAPHAS

Everybody, stand back and be silent.

JUDAS

[*To Jesus.*] Now, Master, thou wilt do it!

JESUS

[*Throwing his hands wildly into the air. In a voice of terrible agony.*] Father, Father, now is the hour! Fill with love the hearts of the people! . . . [*His voice is drowned in laughter and hisses.*]

BOOZ

Call louder. Perhaps he did not hear you.

KORA

Try again, Jesus.

JESUS

[*Falling to his knees.*] Father! Father!...

JUDAS

Master, how is it with thee?

[*Jesus starts, rises suddenly, and moves as if to walk away; but the crowd is walled around him on all sides.*]

BOOZ

Call again upon your father. Perhaps he is asleep.

PILATE

Silence with these taunts! The man is ridiculous enough.

SARAS

Worthy Governor, . . .

PILATE

[*Interrupting.*] I will not hear any more arguments or restatements of the evidence. The man has been a disturber. He shall be punished. [*The crowd cheers.*] When he has been soundly scourged, perhaps he will no longer think that he is the king of Israel, or that your God is his father. I, therefore, order him scourged, after which he shall leave Jerusalem at once, and be free to go home. . . .

[*The outbreak of dissatisfaction among the priests, each entreating Pilate in a loud voice, and the threatening cries of the mob, drown his voice. Pilate's gestures indicate that he is giving the soldiers directions as to the scourging. The Roman soldiers, by Terreno's command, lay hold on Jesus, and hurry him off at left, followed by some of the crowd. Pilate retires into the palace, amid the clamoring of the priests and the uproar of the people.*]

CAIAPHAS

[*After the noise has subsided a little.*] Priests, scribes, elders, and councilors, gather here by Annas. Everyone else stand where he is. We will not give up until the Nazarene is on the cross. The blood of our ancestors is still in us.

[*The priests, scribes, elders, and councilors gather around Annas, and engage in earnest discussion.*]

CAIAPHAS

[*To the people.*] You all remember the silver eagles!

THE CROWD

We remember! . . . We remember! . . .

CAIAPHAS

For five days and five nights we cried aloud until the Romans removed the heathen images from among us.

THE CROWD

So will we now! . . . We will not cease to cry out! . . .

CAIAPHAS

Not till this enemy of God has tasted death.

LEVI

[*Turning to Caiaphas and the people, confidentially.*] We have just now learned that it is whispered in the palace that Procula, Pilate's wife, has had a strange dream about the Nazarene. A foolish interpretation has caused Pilate to deny us.

ANNAS

O thou God of our fathers, must I in my old age behold Israel ruled by the dreams of a woman!

MANY VOICES

No! . . . no! . . . no! . . .

[*From now on, when there is a lull in the noise of the crowd, may be heard the measured blows of the scourges.*]

DARPHAS

He does not cry out. Why does he not cry out?

AMIEL

It may be he is still expecting God to help him.

CAIAPHAS

[*Turning to the priests, scribes, elders, and councilors, in a low voice.*] Pilate is not moved by dreams. Nor is he afraid of the Nazarene. He is punishing us for past deeds and schooling us for future use. But we will not be schooled by him! All of you go quickly among the people here and tell each to stand firm. Tell each to cry out for the Nazarene's death, and cry out again and again. We will shake these marble columns with the noise of our despair. This is still Israel and not Rome!

[*As the priests, scribes, elders, and councilors move through the crowd, all manner of cries are heard, "We demand the death of Jesus! . . . Come back, Pilate! . . . Come out again! . . . We hate cowardice! . . . We demand justice! . . . No honest men would rule us by the silly dreams of a woman! . . ." etc. Presently the bronze doors violently swing open, and Pilate hastens to the front of the balcony. He raises his hand for silence. Order is slowly restored. The measured blows of the scourges are heard again.*]

PILATE

[*Angrily.*] I ask you to be quiet and disperse. I have given my decision. [*Many voices break out again.*] Be quiet, or you will provoke me to call the guards from the Tower!

THE CROWD

[*Heard above the confusion and uproar.*] Call the guards! . . . Call the guards! . . . We do not care! . . . We will not stop crying out till the Nazarene is dead! . . .

[*There is much pushing about in the crowd, but none go away. During the noise and confusion, Pilate beckons Caiaphas to come to him. The two exchange some words, Pilate talking very earnestly and pointing toward the people, and Caiaphas shaking his head.*]

PILATE

[*Again raising his hand for order.*] You, High Priest, scribes, and elders, I ask you to command the people to be silent and disperse!

[*Another outbreak is beginning when Caiaphas motions for quiet.*]

CAIAPHAS

O Governor, the hearts of the people have been wounded! The God of the people has been blasphemed. Moses, the light of the people, has been spit upon! For ages our God has been a solace in dark hours. And we have had dark hours. This people has had dark hours. Is there anything in thy household here or back in Rome, O Governor, as dear to thee as our God is to us? There is nothing that will still the voice of the people. I could not still it for more than

a moment if I would. The guards from the Tower have no terror for them. They themselves are more terrible in their love of God than the guards of the Tower in their love of Rome. The people seek only the love and forgiveness of their God.

ALL THE PEOPLE

Blessed be his name! . . .

PILATE

Then I will remind you, High Priest, and all who are clamoring here, that this is the day on which it is the custom for me to release to you a prisoner.

CAIAPHAS

We have not forgotten it.

PILATE

Your High Priest says that you seek only the love and forgiveness of your God. Will not your love and forgiveness include this foolish man whose back is bleeding yonder, as you expect the love and forgiveness of your God to include you? . . .

SEVERAL PERSONS

No! . . . no! . . . no!

PILATE

Silence! I have not finished. I have heard in the palace that he often has been seen from the

palace windows going about quietly, as if in a state of dreams, with his humble followers. And I have heard that men say he gives to the poor and does not seek gain for himself.

CAIAPHAS

The people will have Barabbas released, not Jesus.

PRIESTS AND SCRIBES

Release Barabbas! Barabbas! . . .

PILATE

You are not the people. I will hear the people. [*To the crowd.*] Will you have Jesus or Barabbas released?

THE PEOPLE

Barabbas! . . . Barabbas! . . . Barabbas! . . . To the cross with Jesus! . . .

[*Judas has entered from the left, and works his way through the crowd to the balcony just below Pilate.*]

JUDAS

Governor, O Governor, release Jesus! A terrible wrong. . . .

THE PEOPLE

[*Drowning the voice of Judas.*] We will have Barabbas released! . . . Barabbas! . . . Barabbas! . . .

[*Judas is roughly handled while the crowd is calling for Barabbas; he is pushed off at left, toward the place where the soldiers are scourging Jesus.*]

PILATE

I shall send for Barabbas, that you may behold standing together a murderer and one whose only fault seems to be that he has looked overmuch at the stars.

[*As Pilate turns to retire into the palace, the soldiers, followed by a noisy crowd, bring in Jesus. He is tottering, his back is covered with blood, and his face is white, like the face of a dead person. Surrounded by soldiers, he stands trembling in front of the balcony.*]

PILATE

[*In disgust.*] Behold your king! [*Enters the palace.*]

THE PRIESTS

We have no king but Cæsar! . . .

CAIAPHAS

Scribes, priests, elders, and councilors, follow me. We must take counsel of one another. The hours are passing. We must quickly finish this holy work. [*To the crowd.*] Everyone remain where he is, while we step aside a little to think among ourselves. O children of generations of

holy men, if you remain steadfast, nothing can stay the hand of God!

THE PEOPLE

We will remain steadfast! . . . We will be faithful! . . .

[*The priests, scribes, elders, and councilors, following Caiaphas, push their way out at right. Jesus is alone in the midst of the people and soldiers. They stand staring at him.*]

BOOZ

(Trader)

[*To Terreno.*] Captain, we would worship our new king.

SEVERAL PERSONS

Let us worship our new king! Let us worship him! . . .

[*A spirit of merriment takes hold of the crowd.*]

TERRENO

(Captain Roman Guards)

Stand back, all of you! [*The guards push back the people.*] Does he look like a king?

KORA

(Money Changer)

He looks precisely like a king. His back is covered with a scarlet cloak.

BENJAMIN
(Trader)

But he has no crown.

DATHAN
(Money Changer)

O Captain, send a soldier to fetch a crown for him. Yonder by the fountain are bushes. A green crown will be very becoming. Ancient kings wore emerald studded crowns — did they not? Perhaps Cæsar himself has one. I am sure Cæsar has one. Jesus shall have everything that Cæsar has.

SEVERAL PERSONS

A crown, . . . a crown for our king! . . .

TERRENO

[*To the soldiers.*] The Jews will honor their king. We will not deny them. Fetch a branch from yonder bush for a crown. [*Taking a cloak from the back of one of the soldiers.*] And here is a robe for the king. It is scarlet. It should be purple. Cæsar's robes are purple.

BOOZ

It has a purple border. It is like enough to Cæsar's. Put it on him. We must not be too particular.

A VOICE

Here is a reed. The king must have a scepter.

TERRENO

[*Throws the cloak over the shoulders of Jesus and offers him the reed. He pays no attention.*] Take the scepter, king!

BOOZ

Take the reed, Messias, or by Abraham we will not worship you!

[*There is pushing about, talking and laughing among the people; the traders, money changers, and others mingle freely with the Roman soldiers surrounding Jesus.*]

A SOLDIER

[*Striking Jesus a sharp blow across the knuckles.*] Take the scepter, do you hear?

[*Jesus takes the reed.*]

ANOTHER SOLDIER

Hail, king of the Jews!

TERRENO

O noble king, will you be bathed to-day in the dark wine fetched from the port of Syracuse, or in the yellow milk of the wild goats of Arabia?

[*The crowd cheers.*]

A SOLDIER

[*Plucking at his beard.*] Will you have your hair touched a bit with dust of gold? You do not answer. You are too modest for a king. At

least your eyelashes — that will please the young women who admire you.

BOOZ

Captain, I too would worship him.

THE CROWD

And I! . . . and I! . . . let us all worship him!

TERRENO

Order, stand back; or I will stop the ceremonies! Form a line, then all may pay him some noble praise.

[*The Jews and soldiers form a line, amid merriment and many acclamations of "Hail, King! Hail, King of Israel!"*]

DATHAN

Wait, here comes the crown-bearer.

[*One pushes his way in and hands Terreno a branch of green leaves drawn into a circle.*]

TERRENO

Order, silence! I will crown your king. [*Hesitates.*] This crown has thorns.

THE CROWD

Crown him! Crown him! . . .

BOOZ

The thorns will hold it fast to his head. It is

a good thing to have thorns on a crown. All crowns ought to have them.

TERRENO

[*Placing the branch of leaves upon the head of Jesus.*] Now each as he passes may pay him some noble praise. Move quickly, and let your speech be brief, that all may honor him.

A SOLDIER

[*Kneeling.*] King of Israel, Cæsar invites you to Rome. [*Arises, takes the reed from the hand of Jesus, strikes him across the face with it, and hands it back.*]

KORA

[*Kneeling.*] O King, bring back. . . .

TERRENO

You are kneeling in blood.

KORA

[*Moving aside.*] O King, give back my money which thou didst scatter over the floor of the Temple. [*Spits upon him.*]

TERRENO

Make haste, pass on, that each may have his turn.

BOOZ

[*Kneeling.*] Messias, bring back my eleven sheep that thou didst hurl into the valley of the

Temple and kill. [*Arising, strikes him viciously on the face. Jesus staggers and is about to fall, but is held up by several persons. The crowd cheers.*]

TERRENO

[*Pushing Booz away.*] I will not have him worshipped so ardently. Let your devotion be measured by moderation. The man must still be on his feet when the Governor returns.

JACOB

O King, bring back out of the air my doves which thou didst frighten away on the day before yesterday!

A SOLDIER

[*Kissing a corner of the cloak covering Jesus.*] O King of the Jews, since I have seen thee, the gods of Rome do not charm me any longer. But thy crown is not on straight. [*Straightens the crown, and presses it firmly on the head of Jesus, until the blood trickles down his face.*] So, that is better; it should sit firmly upon thy noble brow. [*The crowd cheers again.*]

[*Judas has climbed part way up the stairs leading to the balcony.*]

JUDAS

[*Calling down to Jesus.*] O Master, Jesus, Master! . . .

BENJAMIN

What grief in this man's words! Is he a follower of Jesus?

BOOZ

It was he that led us last night to the hiding place of our new king. Let him worship our new king.

JUDAS

Master, O Master! [*Jesus turns toward Judas.*] They are killing thee! Save thyself!

SEVERAL PERSONS

Save thyself! . . . Call again to the sky! . . . Do a great miracle and we will believe in thee! . . . We will carry the news through Israel and the world!

BOOZ

Save yourself! Did you not tell the people that you will one day sit on the right hand of God and judge Israel? When you are dead, we will tear your flesh and burn it to ashes, that you may not be gathered together again in all eternity.

JESUS

[*Dropping the reed and lifting his hands, in terrible agony.*] Father, Father, forsake me not! Look upon me! I bleed, I die! . . . [*Sinks to the pavement.*]

JUDAS

[*As several persons lift Jesus.*] O Master, give up thy folly! Arouse thyself! Thy mother and brothers grieve for thee. Tell the people thou art not he whom thou hast said. They are killing thee!

A VOICE

This fellow is a follower of the Nazarene. Let us take him. Let us scourge him!

[*Judas is dragged down the stairs, and the noise turns to uproar.*]

TERRENO

We will have no fighting here! Order! Silence! Stand back!

[*The soldiers interfere and Judas rushes out. Caiaphas, priests, elders, scribes, and councilors re-enter from right.*]

BOOZ

Let us go on with the ceremonies. [*Strikes Jesus on the face with the reed, then replaces it in his hand.*] O noble King! . . .

CAIAPHAS

[*Approaching.*] What are you doing with him? I will not allow this mockery. I will not allow it! We do not punish blasphemers with mockery. Take the cloak from his shoulders and the leaves from his head.

[*As the people move back, and the soldiers again surround Jesus, the bronze doors open, and several guards and a prisoner enter. His hands are bound, and he is clothed in torn garments. His eyes are nervous and his face hard and pale. He is led to the front of the balcony. Pilate follows.*]

MANY PERSONS

[*Shouting.*] Barabbas! . . . Barabbas! . . .

PILATE

Silence! [*To the guards below.*] Bring the Nazarene upon the balcony.

[*Jesus totters slowly up the stairs between two soldiers and is placed by the side of Barabbas.*]

PILATE

[*To Terreno.*] Your men have overdone the scourging.

TERRENO

Worthy Governor, he was not strong when they began.

PILATE

His back is bleeding as if it had been cut with sabers. [*To the people.*] According to the custom, I shall release a prisoner. The people shall choose. I will have the people speak freely. I will not have anyone frighten or instruct the people. I will not hear the voice of

the priests coming from the lips of the people. Even now, while I am speaking, I see priests and councilors whispering here and there. I do not know what they are whispering; but I will hear the voice of the people, and not the voice of the priests and councilors. . . . Behold these two men! One an enemy of Rome, a leader of a band of murderous rebels; the other a poor but man-loving fool who fancied himself to be a god. Choose. . . .

THE PEOPLE

[*Loud and continuously.*] Barabbas! Barabbas! Barabbas! . . .

PILATE

[*Lifting his hands and motioning for silence.*] Enough! You have spoken. I release Barabbas, a rebel and conspirator. [*To the guards.*] Unbind him, send him down to the people.

[*There are loud cheers for Barabbas as he descends the balcony.*]

ANNAS

The charges against him were exaggerated.

PILATE

I will not hear the point debated. I have released him — have I not? [*To the people.*] As for this other man, this man of strange fancies, this Nazarene, tottering here, besmeared in

his own blood, has he not suffered enough? Has he not . . .

THE PEOPLE

[*Drowning the voice of Pilate.*] Crucify him! Crucify him! To the cross with him! . . .

[*Pilate lifts his hands for order, but the people continue to cry out until Caiaphas motions them to be silent.*]

CAIAPHAS

O Governor, is it not better that one man shall die than that Jerusalem shall be in uproar and discontent? The highest court in Israel has condemned this king of the Jews, this blasphemer of the God of Israel, this rebel against the authority of Rome. The people demand his death. It would not sound well in the ears of Cæsar, should he be told that the tumult in Jerusalem arose because his honored representative had sheltered and protected one who denied the authority of Rome, claimed for himself the right to judge the people, and declared himself the king of Israel.

PILATE

[*Irritated.*] Do you tell me, before my eyes, at the door of my palace, within sight of my soldiers, that you will send complaints to Tiberius?

CAIAPHAS

I will not send complaints. But there are many

thousands of persons from many lands now gathered in Jerusalem. The clamors of discontent have swift-running feet. Moreover, if there is rebellious uproar here, will not Tiberius inquire the cause? What amazement will be his when he ponders, "A rebel against my authority is fostered by my Governor"!

PILATE

You have not proven the Nazarene a rebel. You have proven that he is a man who thinks he sees things other persons do not see, a dreamer, one who has said something about your religion you do not like. Is that not true?

[*The people hiss.*]

CAIAPHAS

Would Tiberius pause to make fine distinctions should the tumult of rebellion touch his ears?

PILATE

[*Angered.*] Do you threaten me with rebellion?

CAIAPHAS

I do not threaten; but the people now gathered in Jerusalem — who will stop the cries of the discontented people?

PILATE

[*In disgust.*] Take your king. . . . Crucify him!

[*Turns and re-enters the palace. Amid the deafening cheers of the crowd, Jesus is dragged from the balcony, and hurried off at left, surrounded by soldiers and followed by all the people, many crying out amid the uproar, "To the cross! . . . To the cross with him! . . ." After a time the cries grow fainter and fainter. Then silence.*]

CURTAIN.

ACT V

THE RESURRECTION

PERSONS IN ACT V

JOSEPH, an Arimathean
TWO SERVANTS OF JOSEPH
JOANNA
SALOME
TERRENO, Captain of the Roman Guards
MARY, a Magdalene

ACT V

It is just before daybreak of the second morning following. The outlines of a few trees and bushes are discernible, and at back and left the beginning of a cragged cliff. As the action proceeds, the coming dawn lights the scene a little.

[*Three men enter from the right and go toward the cliff.*]

JOSEPH

Here is the tomb. Put down the bier. Here, by the side of the Holy City, had I thought to lie in my last sleep. But now my mind is changed. This city is no holier than any other. Here madmen live, as elsewhere; and here blind and revengeful men rule. This task done, we shall go back to Arimathea.

ONE OF THE MEN

[*Setting down the bier.*] Master Joseph, we laid him in the tomb only the evening before last. Why do we take him out again?

JOSEPH

[*After looking about.*] My wife and children have given me no peace since we laid him here. They say I have dishonored and defiled our tomb.

All day yesterday they begged me to take him away. You two have served me till now we are old men. Tell me, have I dishonored my tomb?

ONE OF THE MEN

Master, he was also a thief — was he not?

JOSEPH

Do they say he was a thief?

THE OTHER MAN

He was nailed to the cross between two thieves. They say he was a fool who thought he was a prophet. Some say he thought he was Messias.

[*They begin to unroll white cloths and lay them over the bier and beside the tomb.*]

JOSEPH

Wait, be silent. Hear you anything?
[*A pause.*]

ONE OF THE MEN

I hear something yonder. [*Points toward the tomb.*]

THE OTHER MAN

I also hear something. It is above the tomb, by the trees.

JOSEPH

Do you think some one is coming?
[*A pause.*]

ONE OF THE MEN

It sounds as if some one were walking over dead leaves in the autumn, or like the fluttering of green leaves in the trees.

THE OTHER MAN

Perhaps it is a bird beating the night with its wings. I do not think anyone is coming.

JOSEPH

It is no one.

[*They continue spreading out the white cloths.*]

JOSEPH

Come, let us throw back the stone from the door. [*The three place themselves on the sides of the stone.*] Now, together. [*The stone falls to the earth, making a loud noise.*]

ONE OF THE MEN

Master! . . .

JOSEPH

Wait a little, do not move or speak.

[*There is silence, except a little noise now and then in the trees, as a fluttering of leaves.*]

JOSEPH

We must not be seen.

ONE OF THE MEN

Master Joseph, from youth you have done all

your deeds in the open. Why do we take him out while it is dark? Why do we not wait till the breaking of dawn?

JOSEPH

[*Bending down and looking into the tomb.*] Come here and look within. It is whispered on the streets by some of his followers that he lying yonder will rise up and live again.

ONE OF THE MEN

[*Shrinking back.*] Master Joseph, it is frightful! I do not like to think in the night of anybody arising from the dead.

JOSEPH

[*Drawing the bier nearer the door and re-arranging the cloths.*] Some of them that condemned him at the trial said, that if they heard it reported that he would rise from the dead, they would tear his flesh and burn it to ashes, that he might not be gathered together again in all eternity. That is why I sought out the lonely place where you have dug his grave. We shall hide him in the earth, that no man shall know where he lies, not even his followers, for they would betray the place.

ONE OF THE MEN

O Master, do not go into the tomb. Perhaps he will arise from the dead while you are within.

JOSEPH

[*Entering.*] Come, we will take him out.

[*The other man follows Joseph. They are heard talking. Then there is silence.*]

THE MAN OUTSIDE

[*Calling softly.*] Master.

THE OTHER MAN

[*Looking out of the door of the tomb.*] Do not call him. He is on his knees. He is weeping.

THE MAN OUTSIDE

The dead man — does he stir? does he move?

THE OTHER MAN

He does not stir.

[*After a brief pause, Joseph and the man carry out Jesus and lay him on the bier. The two men remove the cloths that were about him, toss them back into the tomb, and wrap him in the fresh cloths they have brought. Joseph stands by in silence.*]

ONE OF THE MEN

Master, it is done. Shall we take him to the grave? [*Joseph still stands silent.*] Master, we have finished. Shall we take him away?

JOSEPH

Not yet. Walk aside a little; and when I call

you, come back to me. For a moment I will stand here alone.

[*The two men go off at left.*]

JOSEPH

[*Beside the bier.*] Farewell, strange youth, farewell. But two days ago thou wast a flaming scythe that mowed down the weeds in the Temple. Now how still thou liest! What will they say in Galilee when thou comest not again? They will miss thy sad sweet face, thy soft voice in the evening, and thy dreaming eyes, that had looked into the kingdom of God. The poor will miss thee. They have so few to care for them. Thy image will come to them in the twilight, and in the night-time they will dream they touch thy hand. A little while only will the world remember thee. It has always been so. Thou Jesus, hadst thou known better the ways of life, it might have gone less ill with thee. But thine eyes were in the stars. Thou wast love and fire and storm and love again. God made thee to strive. A flame he set within thy breast. Thou couldst not quench it. Thou wast a harp the world smote roughly, a reed that harsh winds broke in twain. O, Israel had need of thee and the better world which thou didst see in dream! Grasping and disputing priests and senseless ceremonies have made her loveless. Thy heart was full of love,

but thou art dead. Farewell, sweet ardent youth; the twilight hills will miss thee, and the sunlit lanes of villages will not again kiss thy sandaled feet. And I, an old man, shall miss thee. In thee I saw again my youth, and thought I heard again the far voices singing, and almost heard my early God whispering behind thy words. While in their thoughtless beds thy murderers sleep, thou also sleepest. Yet if God, remembering still thy yearning soul, with balm of peaceful rest heal up thy cloven side, and send down warmth to pierce the earth and creep into thy grave, thou wilt come forth whole and strong; for I shall hide thee in the earth from them that crave to tear and burn thy flesh. O God of Abraham, may I have died ere thou avenge this blood-dripping piece of earth! In the days of judgment, what curse wilt thou not send upon vain Jerusalem, that one day loveth a man and the next crucifieth him! Thou sleepest from thy weariness. The sun of thy brief day is set ere noon. I too am weary. I am old, my day is in the evening twilight; and hushed for me will be the far off music of hope and the still whispers in the night, and broken the promise of the moon, when I shall sit and mourn. Farewell, gentle Galilean. I thought to serve thee better than to dig thy grave. Forgive me. . . . How still thou liest!

ONE OF THE MEN

[*Entering hurriedly.*] Master, three are coming yonder.

JOSEPH

Take up the body.

THE OTHER MAN

[*Struggling to replace the stone before the door of the tomb.*] Help me to put back the stone.

JOSEPH

Let it lie. Come away.

[*Joseph goes off at left, followed by the men carrying the body. There is now the first faint light of breaking day. At intervals a soft wind rustles the leaves. After a pause, three women enter at right.*]

JOANNA

I think we have lost our way.

SALOME

Mary, have we lost our way?

MARY

(Magdalene)

Is not yonder the tomb? [*Sobs.*]

JOANNA

Do not weep. It sounds terrible in the night to hear anyone weeping.

SALOME

You weep too much. [*Coming to her.*] You are trembling like a leaf in the wind.

MARY

I will not weep any more.

JOANNA

Let us not go nearer the tomb till it is light. Let us anoint him in the dawn. I am afraid to go nearer till it is light.

SALOME

Why are you afraid? He lies dead within.

MARY

I have brought ointment of myrrh. It will make his body sweet like the body of a child.

JOANNA

I have spice of aloes. My husband brought it from the larder of the Tetrarch. And I have oil. Perhaps I have too much oil. When we have finished, he will lie in the tomb like a sleeping child.

MARY

Like a child sleeping in leaves of lilies that the shepherds gather in the summer mornings. In the whole world there was no one like to him. He was a rose blooming amid stones. He was like the breaking of dawn in the springtime, and

like the twilight of the setting sun in the harvest time. When he touched me I grew still within.

JOANNA

I can see him near me all the time when it is night.

MARY

I too see him in the night. When he spoke to me in the days that are gone, I thought of far off things, as if there were other happy worlds; and I forgot my evil deeds, and was a child again, the world new-born and full of love. Always when I saw him I remembered a beautiful dream I had when I was a child.

JOANNA

My husband says I must not think of him too much. He says it is not good to think of him too much.

SALOME

Come, let us begin. It is growing lighter. How will we push away the stone?

JOANNA

I am afraid. Let us wait a little. I can still see him hanging on the cross, the blood dripping from his face. [*Startles.*] What is that yonder?

SALOME

I see nothing.

MARY

[*Going forward a little.*] Is not some one in a robe of white sitting by the tomb? Is not some one talking in a low voice there by the tomb?

SALOME

I do not see anyone.

JOANNA

Mary, do not go nearer. Perhaps it will come upon you. Perhaps it is an evil spirit that watches near the dead in the night.

MARY

[*Approaching the tomb.*] I think it is a good spirit. I can not understand what it is saying. I am trembling too much to understand.

JOANNA

Mary, do not go any nearer.

MARY

I cannot see it now. But look! The stone has been thrown from the door! [*Looking into the tomb.*] I cannot see him, he is gone, they have taken him away! [*Sobs.*] O, they have taken away him I love! I shall never see him again!

JOANNA

Come, come, let us not stay here! Let us go home. Perhaps the spirits of dead men that were evil have taken him away.

MARY

Perhaps he in a white robe by the tomb was telling us where they have taken him; but we with dead ears could not understand.

SALOME

Come, we shall go back and tell them that he is gone.

JOANNA

No, no, we will not tell anybody. I am afraid to tell anybody. Come, Mary! Do not stay here any longer!

SALOME

Come, come, Mary!

[*Both women hurry off.*]

MARY

[*Sobbing by the tomb.*] O Father, tell me where they have laid him! . . .

A VOICE

Mary.

MARY

Who is calling me? It is dark. I cannot see.

[*Enter Terreno.*]

TERRENO

It is I, Terreno.

MARY

They have taken him away.

TERRENO

Your prophet?

MARY

Him you murdered.

TERRENO

I am a soldier, I live to obey.

MARY

He is gone!

TERRENO

Mary, I have searched for you since the night before last, when I hastened away leaving you alone by the city gate. What said the guards that had been following us when they came upon you?

MARY

They dragged me forth, and the next day sought to stone me in the Temple, for sins I have been guiltless of since the first hour I saw him who told me of the love of God. He forbade them to stone me, and none dared disobey him. Now he is dead! He is gone! I cannot find him! [*Sobs again.*]

TERRENO

Do not weep any more.

MARY

I hear a noise yonder.
[*A pause.*]

TERRENO

I do not hear anything.

MARY

It sounds as if within the tomb.

TERRENO

It is above the tomb — only an idle wind grumbling in the trees.

MARY

I hear some one speaking. Do you hear anyone?

TERRENO

I do not hear anyone speaking.

MARY

Do you see anyone yonder?

TERRENO

I do not see anyone. It is yet too dark to see very far.

MARY

I wish it were light.

TERRENO

I am sure it is no one. It is the wind in the trees.

MARY

[*Lifting her hands.*] O Father, art thou telling me where he lies? Am I yet too sinful to understand thy voice?

TERRENO

Magdalene, forget these fevered days. You waste your youth in tears. [*Tries to take her hand.*]

MARY

O, do not touch me! Your hands are red with blood. Look upon your hands. Are they not still red?

TERRENO

My hands are clean. I laid them not upon him. He was not a son of your God. He was not Messias.

MARY

He saved me from sin.

TERRENO

He could do nothing for himself. How could he do anything for another? When one of his followers at the trial bade him free himself, he could do nothing. He called upon your God, but your God did not listen to him. One act by a

hand from the sky, and Jerusalem would have fallen at his feet. But there was nothing. The sky smiled with sunlight, as if the trial had been a feast.

MARY

I will not listen to you.

TERRENO

You will listen to me till I have finished. Perhaps you will open your eyes. A man standing by the cross cried out so that all the people could hear, "If you can destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself. If you are Messias, come down from the cross." And all the people called out to him, bidding him come down, and they would believe in him. But he did not come down. A scribe cried out to him, "You fool, you trusted in God. Now let him set you free. Did you not say you are the son of God? Can you not come down from the cross?" All the people scoffed him and laughed at him. Even one of the thieves hanging by his side mocked him and cursed him.

MARY

O, speak no more!

TERRENO

Many times he cried out with his eyes fixed on the sky. Each time the people broke forth with

laughter and curses. I think he was expecting your God to come down and help him. At last he saw that the heavens had no thought of him, and he cried out, " My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me!" It was a terrible cry of anguish. I never had heard such a cry of anguish. The people standing almost under him and around him, startled and moved back; and none mocked him any more. He was dead. I too then pitied him.

MARY

[*Weeping.*] O, speak no more!

TERRENO

Magdalene, he is dead, but we live. We will not speak of him again. We will not think of him again. We will think of ourselves, and sometime you and I will drink again to the lees the wine of the cup of life.

MARY

No, no!

TERRENO

Stop weeping, Magdalene. Listen to me. I have bought for you two silver anklets, fastened together with a chain of gold, that will ring like little bells when you walk. You have seen them on the ankles of the daughters of rich priests. In Pisidia I have heard they are worn on the

ankles of young princesses only. No one else is allowed to wear them.

MARY

They are not for me. . . .

TERRENO

Yes, they are for you. You shall have sandals from Laodicea. The kind that have gold cords and white soles, as white as the snow that Pilate puts in his wine, as white as the marble that the priests walk on in the Inner Temple. But when you dance for me you will take off the sandals. Your naked feet are more beautiful than sandals.

MARY

I will not dance again.

TERRENO

Yes, yes, you will dance again.

MARY

Look — some one is staring at us!

TERRENO

Where?

MARY

Yonder.

TERRENO

It is nothing. Listen to me. Look at me while I am talking to you. . . . You shall hang

upon yourself a veil from Arabia, one that is as thin as air, and the color of one that Procula lays over her breast when she goes forth in her litter in Cæsarea on a summer morning. You shall look like a young princess. Men will tremble at your beauty.

MARY

I will put on none of these things. . . .

TERRENO

Yes, you will put them on. And I have a girdle for you. It has a clasp of carved silver. In the center is an eye of amethyst. And on the nights of the days you wear it, you will dream of pleasant things.

MARY

Why this rush of gifts?

TERRENO

You are changed, Magdalene. You are more beautiful than ever.

MARY

It is the love of unearthly things he whom you murdered taught me. I am dead to sin.

TERRENO

He is dead that came between us.

MARY

He has saved me from sin. But they have

taken him away, and I do not know where they have laid him. O, I am tired, I am trembling!

TERRENO

Sit here and rest. I too pitied him. . . . But let us not speak of him any more. Let us not think of him any more.

[*They sit on a stone at right.*]

MARY

[*Starting up.*] I must not sit. I must rise. I hear voices calling me to rise.

TERRENO

I hear nothing. From whence the voices that are calling you?

MARY

Yonder — yonder toward the breaking day. They are calling me. I can hear them. Come, we will hunt the place where they have laid him. Perhaps it is he that is calling me. Perhaps he is calling from the tomb. I hear a voice yonder in the tomb. It is the voice of a dead man! [*Goes toward the tomb.*]

TERRENO

[*Following her.*] It is the sound of the city waking in the dawn. You are stirred, your words are wild. Be still a little.

MARY

[*Looks into the tomb and shrinks back.*] Some one is sitting within — some one dressed in white! Look within!

TERRENO

I can see no one. [*Goes inside the tomb.*]

MARY

See you anyone?

TERRENO

[*Coming out.*] It is no one. It is the white linen that wrapped his body, tossed into a corner.

MARY

Heard you no speaking within — no whispering of unseen lips?

TERRENO

There is no one. I heard nothing. You tremble. Sit still awhile. [*They sit again.*] You are changed, Magdalene. I see now how changed you are. I would be as tender to you as the memory of the dead that are loved. . . .

MARY

O, the dead that are loved! They are more beautiful than anything in the world.

TERRENO

Are they more beautiful than the red of yonder dawn?

MARY

It is terrible. It is like a bloody shield. It is like a shield besmeared with the blood of him who is dead, whom lonely women mourn. It is the blood of Jesus gathered into the sky to shame Jerusalem that murdered him. Look, is it not red like the fresh blood of something that men have slaughtered?

TERRENO

You rouse yourself too much. You are moved by moods as leaves by passing winds. Have no more fear of me. I give you up. I know that for us not again. . . .

MARY

Not again.

TERRENO

You thirst for love, yet you turn your lips away from the cup of love. You think you will be rewarded somewhere hereafter, in some other world perhaps. I do not know where it is you think you will be rewarded. . . .

MARY

[*Pointing upward.*] Yonder.

TERRENO

That is indefinite. It means nothing. Magdalene, listen to me. There will be no drink for them that thirsted here, and then lay down within

the earth. Each will lie with parching throat through all eternity. In the sunken garden of death there is no blooming. The grapes are withered. They yield no wine.

MARY

O, it is terrible to lie in the earth. I know not who will give drink. But there will be drink for them that thirst. Jesus hath said it. [*Starts up.*] Look, is not some one coming toward us — there?

TERRENO

No one is coming. Sit still.

MARY

I wish it were light. I cannot see. I hear some one moving in the dark.

TERRENO

It is the wind.

MARY

Look, is not some one holding a light yonder — a light that flickers?

TERRENO

It is the dawn glistening on the waving leaves that are wet with dew. It is no one.

MARY

[*Sits again.*] I saw him laid in the tomb. I know he is dead, yet I cannot think he is dead. I

think I must see him to-morrow coming on the way. I think I must again hear him speaking to the people. His voice — O, his voice was soft! It was like the voice of a mother pressing her child to her breast. It was more tender than the leaves of roses that the winds kiss in the summer mornings.

TERRENO

He is dead. Let us not speak of him any more.

MARY

[*Startled.*] Listen! I hear the piping of a shepherd's reed. How can that be?

TERRENO

It is the song of birds that are waking with the breaking day.

MARY

[*Sobbing.*] O Master, Jesus, where art thou?

TERRENO

[*Drying her eyes with a small white cloth.*] Do not weep any more. Your face is hot from many tears.

MARY

[*Taking the cloth from his hand and looking at it.*] This has blood upon it! From whence came this cloth?

TERRENO

I carried it from his tomb. It was lying in a corner.

MARY

[*Rising.*] It has blood upon it! It is his blood! [*Presses the cloth to her lips. Frantically.*] Look, . . . he is standing by the tomb! He is calling me! I know his voice! . . .

TERRENO

[*Rising.*] I hear no one, nor see anyone.

MARY

[*Going forward.*] O Master, thou art calling me!

TERRENO

[*Following her.*] Come back. There is no one by the tomb.

MARY

No, no, do not touch me! See how beautiful he is! His face is like the sun in the summer when it is veiled by white clouds! I know his face!

TERRENO

No one is calling you.

MARY

Master, Jesus, it is thou! Thou hast come to me again! It is I, Mary! [*Holding up the cloth.*] See, thy blood! . . .

TERRENO

[*Trying to stop her.*] To whom do you say this? I see no one.

MARY

[*Repulsing him and falling to her knees.*] I will touch thy garment, O I will touch thy garment! [*Crawling frantically forward.*] I will touch thy feet! O Master, there is blood upon thy feet — big drops of blood! Thy feet are red with blood! I will touch thy feet, I will kiss thy feet! Thou art speaking. I know thy voice! Go not yet, stay, O speak again! If thou goest I will follow thee! O deny me not! . . . They sit weeping in Jerusalem! I will tell them! O, I will run to them, I will tell them! . . .

TERRENO

You are crying out like a mad woman. To whom are you crying out? There is no one here but ourselves.

MARY

[*Rising.*] Look — there he goes past the door of the tomb! [*Rushing out, heard calling.*] Peter, John, Joanna, I have seen him! He has come out of the tomb! . . .

CURTAIN.

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